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SIXTY YEARS IN THE  
WILDERNESS

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WILDERNESS

BY SIR HENRY W. LUCY.

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1909.	<i>Feb.</i>	<i>1st Edition</i>
"	<i>Mar.</i>	<i>2nd Impression</i>
"	"	<i>3rd</i> "

# SIXTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS

SOME PASSAGES  
BY THE WAY

BY  
SIR HENRY W. LUCY

LONDON  
SMITH, ELDER, & CO.  
15 WATERLOO PLACE

1911

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THE GREAT OCEAN

OF THE WORLD

PRINTED BY  
WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED  
LONDON AND BECCLES

THE GREAT OCEAN  
OF THE WORLD  
BY  
J. H. STUART

## TO MY WIFE

*"As I look back, I think my marriage  
was the best move I ever made in my life."*

—R. L. STEVENSON.

## THE END

THE END OF THE WORLD IS AT HAND

THE END OF THE WORLD IS AT HAND

THE END OF THE WORLD IS AT HAND

## TO THE READER

A CONSIDERABLE number of the chapters composing this volume appeared in an eight months' run through the *Cornhill Magazine*. They are supplemented by additional matter equal to one-third of the whole.

This does not exhaust material accumulated over a long period of time, during which I have been honoured by the personal acquaintance and correspondence of a richly varied circle of men, eminent in diverse walks of life. In reviewing it, the question presented itself whether this book should run to the proportions of two volumes? I decided to limit them to one. If the gentle public please, they shall have the other at a later time.

HENRY W. LUCY.

REFORM CLUB,  
March, 1909.





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# SIXTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS

## I

### MY START IN LIFE

IN the course of a lecturing tour which befell eight years ago, announcement in the local papers that I was to visit Gloucester brought me a letter from an unknown correspondent urgently asking for an interview. Having half an hour to spare, I called and heard the interesting disclosure that I, as head of the Hereford branch of the Lucy family, am the rightful owner of Charlecote.

I bore the news with philosophical calmness, but was interested in the voluminous notes of pedigree my friend in his zeal had acquired. They showed, what is an uncontested fact, that in the year 1786 George Lucy of Charlecote died childless. There was much hunting for the heir, resulting in the claim of a Mr. Hammond, second cousin of the late lord of Charlecote, being conceded. Whereupon he, by sign manual, took the name of Lucy. According to my informant, my forebears, then living in Ledbury, whose church still shelters monuments to dead-and-gone Lucys, should have fought for their own. Probably in those days of

slack intercommunication they never heard of the sudden death of the intestate owner of Charlecote. However it be, I must leave the responsibility with them.

I was born at Crosby, near Liverpool, on December 5. It is characteristic of the haphazard ways of the household to which I was introduced that it is at this time uncertain whether the year was 1844 or 1845. With old-age pensions available, I begin to think it must have been 1844. Crosby at that time was a rural village. Certainly there was a garden attached to our house, as I remembered my mother telling me how my father used to carry me round it, picking for me the largest strawberries.

Even at the time this was told me I thought it notable, since it was about all he ever did for me. An engraver in the watch trade, admittedly of great taste and skill, he never within my knowledge was capable of making both ends meet. His father was a well-to-do old gentleman with a large family, amongst whom on his death he equally divided his fortune. I do not remember the legacy making any appreciable difference in our household. Probably it was mortgaged in advance. My grandfather lived in a terrace of white houses at Seacombe, facing the river and Liverpool. I recollect only once finding myself in his august presence. He was sitting at one side of the fireplace (left-hand side going in), a prim gentleman dressed in black, with a white neckcloth and a chilling aspect. On the other side of the fireplace sat an old lady, also bolt upright, in a black gown, with a colossal white cap on her head, on the whole of kindlier aspect.

There came to me in due order of bequeathal their portraits, painted more than a hundred years ago by a

master-hand. They hang in our dining-room in London, and follow the comings and goings of the grandson with wondering eyes. My grandfather put me through a tremendous examination, chiefly in arithmetic, and when it was over gave me fourpence. From the length of the examination I expected at least half a crown. As it turned out, fourpence was the kinder gift. At that time there was stationed at the approach to St. George's Landing-stage at Liverpool a man with a truck on which was displayed a tempting array of a compound resembling very stiff batter pudding. Greyish-white in hue, here and there a raisin was ostentatiously stuck on the surface. It was sold in slabs, a penny each. Passing homeward, I invested half my capital in this nameless substance. I was dreadfully ill after eating it, and see now the finger of Providence in my grandfather's restraint from opulent generosity. If he had given me the half-crown and I had bought fifteen pennyworth of this stuff, my career, not yet started, would never have been run. "Called hence by early doom," I should have "lived but to show how sweet a flower in Paradise might bloom."

I do not remember Crosby. My first recollection of budding life goes back to a time I was sitting on my mother's knee learning my letters out of a bible, the red leather binding of which I see as I write. It was a Sunday afternoon and the people were passing down the road going to church. There was in Mill Lane a Chapel of Ease in connection with Everton Church, at whose services I, at a very early age, became a regular attendant. Before I was four years old I could read fluently. Taken to church and set to stand on the bench, I proclaimed the accomplishment by reciting the responses at the top of my voice. I was



conscious of creating a sensation, which I fear bound my thoughts to earth to the detriment of spiritual advancement.

Then and throughout my boyhood I was taken with great regularity to as many services as the church provided. One Sunday afternoon, still at this little schoolroom in Mill Lane, it happened that the Curate in Charge did not put in an appearance. After waiting a while, it was decided that we had better go home. I set off, holding by the hand some grown-up—I do not remember who. Just as we got to the end of Mill Lane, turning homeward along Everton Road, the familiar church bells suddenly rang out. I knew what was the matter. The laggard Curate had turned up and it was decided to commence the service. I was in mortal terror that my temporary guardian would also note this signal, would rightly construe its meaning, and that I should be conducted back to sit out the service. He did not grasp the situation, much to my surprise at the time. Now I suspect that possibly he was not so dense as he seemed.

This must have happened while we lived in Baines Place, off Breck Road. Baines Place was a *cul-de-sac*, and the next move of our household was into another *cul-de-sac*, named Christian Street. These were probably the only streets of this construction in Everton, and my father found them both out. In a figurative sense he himself, through all his life, dwelt in a *cul-de-sac*. In Christian Street he set up in business for himself, and later I, wishful to do something to help him, undertook to keep his books and make out his accounts. The gross amount was so ludicrously small that after a while I gave it up. Yet he was always going to be a rich man. He shut himself up in his

little workroom engaged in inventing things. What he invented I never knew, for he always locked the door when he went out, and the pecuniary proceeds of the enterprise never appeared in the day-book or ledger I kept. One idea he had was to preserve flowers beautiful for ever. I call to mind a melancholy collection of roses, with something mysterious done to their stems, submitted for family approval. They looked very miserable to start with, and, presently dying, my father locked himself in his room and invented something else.

He had a passion, not shared by an unworthy son, of getting up early in the morning and going out for a walk in what was at that time the sylvan district of Everton, with its Rupert Lane and other mementoes of a time when the Cavalier Prince held the hill for the King. On one of these excursions he made the acquaintance of an Irishman, who told a piteous tale of want and hunger. He was brought home and served with a substantial breakfast. For some time after he was generally within hail at breakfast time. Desirous of showing his gratitude, he presented my father with a goat, probably "conveyed" from an unprotected field. If he had given us a white elephant it would scarcely have been more embarrassing. What to do with the goat became a matter of anxious family council. There was a strip of garden at the back of the house that seemed the very place for him. He was accordingly installed with a rope round his neck attached to a stake driven into the ground.

It was late spring time, and the garden looked quite pretty as we tenderly bade the goat good-night, placing a cabbage within convenient distance should he wake in the night and feel hungry. The early riser,

looking out upon the garden the following morning, beheld a painful sight. The prim grass plot was torn up as if a troop of cavalry had galloped across it. Flower beds were ravaged. Nothing but a wrack of stem and leaf was left behind. Billy, as we fondly called our guest, had pulled up the stake and passed a pleasant night with the pansies, wallflowers, white rock, and other cherished flowers.

Evidently this wouldn't do. Beneath the staircase leading to the kitchen there was a closet. It was predestined for Billy. But you may bring a goat to the top of a staircase; you can't be sure he will descend. We ingeniously overcame the difficulty by one walking backward down the staircase holding a carrot at reasonable distance from Billy's nose. When he completed descent the carrot was thrown into the closet, he made haste to follow, we shut and latched the door, and once more were able to breathe freely.

An hour later the household was disturbed by piercing shrieks. One of the girls, going upstairs, came upon Billy on the second landing. He had butted open the door below the kitchen staircase, and, with instinctive hereditary habit, climbed the heights beyond.

The next morning I volunteered to take him out to feed in a field close by. We got there all right, I desperately holding on to the rope round his neck. He evidently appreciated the grass, ate his fill, and, probably cheered by the meal, began ambling round me in distinctly unpleasant fashion. After treading a few measures he bolted. I fell flat on the grass hoping that my weight, if it did not bring him to a halt, would at least hamper him. Billy took no more notice of me than if I'd been a feather. After dragging me



along for what seemed a mile, tearing my pinafore to shreds, scratching my hands and knees, he threatened me with worse fate when we reached the high road. I was constrained to let go the rope. Billy, kicking up his heels with access of delight, speedily disappeared round the turn of the road, and, like ships posted up at Lloyds', has "not since been heard of."

Another grateful *bénéficiaire* was a house-painter. In this case it was my mother's kindly heart and hospitable habits that won his gratitude. He came from Westmoreland, where his father was farmer in a small way, his mother a notable maker of cheese. He was, he said, presently going home for a holiday and would bring back a cheese.

He was as good as his word. But never before, on sea or land, was encountered a cheese like this product of Westmoreland. It was not very large, and in shape suggested a cannon-ball. Another kindred point was its excessive hardness. On its arrival the familiar process of attacking it with a knife was tried. It turned the edge of several. A hammer was equally inefficacious. At length a chopper was brought into play, and in the course of time the spheroid yielded to its influence.

Whilst elder members of the family wielded the chopper, I made rather a good thing out of it, since under successive blows small pieces of glistening cheese were distributed about the floor. With a crust of bread they were excellent.

It was from Christian Street that I took the first important step of my life. I went to school. In many ways the accident of the choice of my school has influenced my life. But, as far as my parents were concerned, the selection was made in the usual happy-

go-lucky fashion. I think the strongest motive in settling the matter was the remarkably low scale of school fees. The maximum charge was five shillings a quarter. The Crescent School, as it was called, was started in connection with the Crescent Chapel, then under the administration of the Rev. John Kelly. A committee of the congregation managed the school, and where the school pence fell short of meeting the charges the deficit was met by subscription. It was not, as will be guessed, an aristocratic seminary. In my time it was dowered with the possession of a heaven-born schoolmaster. Sometimes I used to hear of boys playing truant. I think I could have better understood their running away from their dinner to get back to school, and, as the incident of the nameless compound purchased after the visit to my grandfather testifies, I was pretty hungry in those days. To me, under the kindly, firm direction of Mr. White, school was a place of daily delight.

The Crescent School was managed under the monitor system. There was a head-master, two or three assistant masters, and what seemed innumerable classes were taken by monitors selected from the upper forms. The usual course was for a boy to enter one of the lowest classes and so work his way up to the first, itself divided into four sections. Thanks to my mother, to whom I owe whatever is good in me, I was, on the preliminary examination, found so far advanced that I was at once placed in the fourth division of the first class. I do not know how old I was when I entered the school. I must have been a mere child. Certainly I was not yet breeched. I do not forget this, because my appearance in the first class was much resented by the older boys who had won their way there through

all the grades. What with my lace-frilled calico pantalettes, and my unusual surname, they affected to believe I was a girl, an imputation that sorely wounded me.

Though I do not know at what age I entered the school, I know the precise date on which I left it. It was in August, 1856, at which time I was nearing eleven, or twelve, as the case may be. It marked the full extent of my schooling. Little as was the amount of school fees, the watch-engraving business falling upon bad times, and the inventions still halting on the way to perfection, payment was frequently in arrears. I suppose I should have left school before the mature age I reached, had it not been for a fortuitous circumstance in connection with the school system. I very soon made my way into the first division of the first class—One-number-One, it was quaintly called—and was made a monitor of the first rank, receiving a subsidy which, if not taxed by fines, amounted to as much as two shillings a month. Fines were devised for all kinds of things. With an average measure of versatility and perseverance, a monitor could in a single day incur an aggregate of fines that would exceed a whole month's pay and leave him indebted to the committee. My fines were all under one head—arriving late in the morning. By resolutely struggling against my infirmity, I managed to draw five shillings, or very nearly five shillings, within the three months, and, when quarter day came round, proudly paid my school fees out of my own pocket.

In 1856 circumstances pointed to the appropriateness of the time for withdrawing from school. One was that in a school of five or six hundred boys I had at the midsummer half won the head prize. I have it

in my bookcase now, with my dear old schoolmaster's inscription of name and date. Of all books in the world to give a boy it was a translation of D'Aubigny's "History of the Reformation," printed in double columns of small type, and cheaply bound in blue cloth. I frankly confess that with an insatiable thirst for reading, I have never read D'Aubigny's "History of the Reformation." At the time of its presentation I seem to have preferred works of another character, especially delighting in Walter Scott and Captain Marryat. An elder sister kept me in thrall, her humblest bondservant for weeks, with the spell of Anne of Gierstein. She had the book, and doled it out to me an hour at a time in consideration of doing some errand or other service for her.

One day, whilst still at school, I was sent down to a circulating library in Lord Street, to change a book. The volume was "Percival Keene." As I walked along I looked through the pages. Fascinated, I began at the beginning and read steadily on, walking through the crowded streets. The library was, I think, called the Athenæum, a sombrely respectable place, led up to by stone steps. On one of these I sat down and went on with the story. When I looked up the aspect of the street was changed. Lamps were beginning to twinkle here and there. People were hurrying homeward in a steady stream. It was evening, and the library was closed! I had been sitting on the steps all through the day, dinnerless. But I had finished "Percival Keene."

Years after, going down to Portsmouth as special correspondent of the *Daily News*, awaiting the return of the troops from Ashantee, I remembered how Percival Keene had, in his day, swaggered through the streets



of the town. I took the book with me to read it in the very place Marryat once made familiar to my mind. Alack! I could not get through fifty pages of the book, would indeed, if I had had the choice, doubtless have preferred D'Aubigny's "History of the Reformation."

That I should have won the head prize seemed to show that there was nothing further for me to learn at the Crescent School. An additional, perhaps weightier, reason for withdrawal, was the possibility of my supplementing the household revenues by whatsoever modest weekly wage. I do not remember that there was any serious or prolonged discussion as to the precise channel for launching me in life. The elders of the Crescent Chapel, mostly Liverpool merchants or traders, testified to their interest in the school by finding room for the boys of the first class in their offices. Purely by accident I was spared the shop, and the first vacancy being in the office of Messrs. King and Son, stock and share brokers, I went there, entering public life in August, 1856, at a weekly wage of 3s. 6d.

## II

### IN THE HIDE AND VALONIA BUSINESS

I HAVE often wished I had stayed longer in this office. Acquaintance with stockbroking and the ways of the Stock Exchange form a useful addition to general knowledge. It certainly would have been much more valuable than the insight into the hide and valonia business I next had an opportunity of acquiring. My Stock Exchange connection was prematurely cut short by a failing never eradicated. I had to be at the office by nine o'clock in the morning, and I rarely was. After one or two remonstrances, Mr. King gave me a week's notice. Thus was I shipwrecked on the very threshold of life. I remember, walking home on the last night of my engagement, coming up with another little office-boy also homeward bound. We did not know each other, had never been introduced, but, after the manner of boys, fell into conversation and exchanged confidences. I was sad at heart, comparing my lot with his: he a trusted, probably a treasured, assistant in a commercial house. I disgraced, dismissed with 3s. 6d. in my pocket, and no prospect of replenishing it.

My mother went to my old schoolmaster, who speedily put me on the track of another engagement. This was with Mr. Robert Smith, hide merchant. Mr. Smith was a deacon at the Crescent Chapel, and a member of the school committee, a noteworthy man

who, directly and indirectly, had considerable influence on my life. His office was in Red Cross Street, a worm-eaten, rat-haunted place in a courtyard near the docks. On one side stood the warehouse, an old building which dated back almost to the founding of Liverpool's fortunes. It has disappeared long ago; probably it fell down, as the workmen used to tell me it certainly would.

Mr. Smith was not in a large way of business, and the clerical staff was limited. There was an old gentleman, formerly a prosperous hide merchant, who had come down in the world, and was glad to take the 30s. or 40s. a week offered him by the frugal Smith. I always had a notion, of course purely imaginative, that poor old Tunstall, when he took service, had promised to bring over some of the customers who had contributed to the fortunes of his own house when he was a merchant prince. They never came, and that was a circumstance that did not assist Mr. Smith in overlooking the broken-down old man's habit of midday tippling. Tunstall and I shared a desk. Across the waste of years I smell the caraway-seed he assiduously chewed on returning from one of his excursions to report on some cargo of hides he had been examining or valonia he had been sampling.

Between these two men there was a universe of difference. Old Tunstall, with his red nose growing too weak to carry the glasses he wore on its very tip, shambling about the office in his shabby black clothes, pen in hand, crunching his caraway-seed and affecting to be stupendously busy: prim Robert Smith, tall, erect, spotless in attire—a blue frock-coat, buff waistcoat, grey trousers, with riding-straps tightly holding them over his square-toed shoes. He was, I think, a

kind-hearted man, but he was not genial. When the odour of caraway-seed was exceptionally pungent, it was painful to see him cast upon old Tunstall a look of withering indignation, anger and scorn that made me tremble in my boots.

That I wore boots is, by the way, a fact that proves Mr. Smith was not so tyrannical as memory recalls him. For himself he had worn shoes all his life, and he had no patience with people who preferred boots. One recommendation about his shoes he, really anxious for my welfare, pointed out was that, having them made exactly the same shape, he could change them about every morning, and so wear them evenly on sole and heel.

"What do you want with lefts and rights?" he used to ask me, as if I were responsible for the introduction and prevalence of the national custom.

He cherished a deeply rooted objection to the use of envelopes. All the correspondence of the office was carried on upon smooth blue paper of letter size, a make extinct now, I fancy. It was folded over and fastened with a wafer, and woe to me if the corners were not true and square.

Mr. Smith lived in a house facing a pleasant walled garden in Breck Road, now a nest of jerry-built cottages. Office work began at nine in the morning and finished at any time in the evening between six and eight. On Saturday afternoons we were supposed to make holiday. When I first went to Redcross Street it was one of my multifarious duties to walk up to Breck Lodge every Saturday afternoon for clean towels. As it was three miles from the office this pretty well disposed of my half-holiday. Two small towels were doled out to us every week, Mr. Smith, though scrupulously clean



himself, not thinking it necessary we should waste his time at the office with undue ablutions. It occurred to me that if I brought down four or six towels at a time, I might sometimes have a Saturday afternoon for other purposes. It was long before I carried the point. For years "the boy" had journeyed on Saturday afternoon to Breck Lodge with two soiled towels, bringing down two clean ones on Monday mornings, and if the rule were broken no one could say what might happen.

Everything in Mr. Smith's house and office went by rule. So abject was the terror in which every one near him lived that the housekeeper had quite a turn when I broached the subject. A dear old thing was Anne, one of my earliest friends. With a maid-of-all-work and occasional assistance from Joseph, who doubled the functions of gardener and coachman, she managed the household. Her kitchen was a paradise of cleanness and neatness, with bright brass pans flashing on the walls, and a steel fender gleaming in the firelight. Very early in our acquaintance Anne took to asking me to tea, when I, towel-laden, made my weekly visit: tea with real cream in it, cakes of her own making, bread-and-butter, jam galore, now and then, when fortune favoured the hens, an egg.

Joseph was a big, heavy-limbed, red-and-white-faced man, brought from Bolton cheap. He had an ineradicable objection to brushing his boots, whether as to soles or uppers, and as a consequence was never permitted to enter Anne's kitchen. If he had anything to say, he stood at the open door and bawled it out, or made uncouth signs at the window.

It shocked my sense of propriety even in those childhood days to see Joseph sitting behind his master on the dogcart driving down to the office, the one

looking as if he had stepped out of an old picture-frame, the other frowsy, unwashed, with garden soil clinging to his boots, and hairs from the horse's coat speckling his garments. Thought and speech came slowly to Joseph, the mechanism being curiously assisted by a habit of unfastening the last two buttons of his waistcoat. As daily life presented many problems, Joseph's waistcoat was rarely fully buttoned, a peculiarity that did not add a touch of smartness. He was, however, a capital gardener, growing whole beds of sweet-smelling flowers, stocks, sweet-williams, verbenas, wallflowers, with here and there the glory of a rose-bush. Sometimes when I walked through the garden on the way home and came across Mr. Smith, he would say, "Henery"—he could not make too much of me, so added a syllable to my Christian name—"would you like some flowers?"

I would indeed. So we walked round the garden, and he picked out all the full-blown roses on the verge of dissolution and any other flowers the judicious cutting of which would improve root or branch. Though on beneficence bent, Mr. Smith ever had a frugal mind. His fitful generosity rose to reckless heights when, at the close of seven years' service on a very miserable salary (quite as much as I was worth in the hide and valonia line), he, as a parting gift, presented me with a five-pound note and some books. In view of the act of grace he went about his library on the principle that guided his steps in the garden—weeding it out, as it were. The volumes, being chiefly of a theological character, made quaint additions to my treasured possessions. But a book is a book, and I was glad to have these, just as I was really grateful for the faded flowers.

Seven years I served Mr. Smith. How I managed to stay or how he managed to keep me is alike inexplicable.

"I like the smell of a good hide, Henery," he sometimes said, regarding me with stern reproach.

On my soul and conscience I could make no sympathetic response, for I hated the smell and loathed the touch. Almost worse was the valonia. This, I may mention for the guidance of the uninitiated, is a tanning substance imported from the Levant, in appearance something like the acorn, with a supernatural capacity for creating dust. We had many samples in the office spread out on brown paper on a broad desk close by mine. I suspected at the time, and am now certain, that when Mr. Smith came up to this desk, got hold of a sample of valonia, shook it violently about and buried his face in the cloud of dust by way of smelling it, he was thinking more of me than of the quality of the valonia he affected to test. He knew I was privately possessed of a rag with which, when left in the office by myself, I used to free my desk from the abominated dust. He did not mean it unkindly. It was discipline intended for my good here and hereafter.

### III

#### POETRY AND PHONOGRAPHY

THE weakness that proved my ruin at Messrs. King's was not overcome by the consequent disaster. I was rarely at Redcross Street by nine o'clock, which did not matter if Mr. Smith had not arrived. Sometimes he had, and, as I had to pass his private office on the way to my desk, I caught sight of a visage clothed in blood-curdling wrath. His habit was to sit in his room with his door closed, but he never failed to have it wide open when he was there first and I late. I believe he, at whatever sacrifice of personal convenience, made these occasional nine-o'clock raids in order to cause me righteous uneasiness on approaching the office, uncertain whether he might have arrived. In later years he devised a more ingenious and, for him, more luxurious way of doing his duty to me in this respect. He asked me to breakfast at Breck Lodge, and as the time fixed was eight o'clock, it practically came to pass that I was obliged to be in evidence fully an hour before the ordinary office time. Many a miserable night I spent in anticipation of the necessity of breakfasting at Breck Lodge at eight in the morning.

I seem to have been nearly always in disgrace, earliest of all in connection with the old warehouse in Redcross Street. From the topmost floor on the fifth storey there projected a crane with a long chain and a



gigantic hook at the end. This was designed to haul up bales of hides or sacks of valonia for storage in the various rooms. I spent a good deal of time in this old warehouse on friendly terms with the men. When they were lowering bales or sacks I was accustomed, being in the yard, to plant a foot in the hook, fold one leg round the returning chain, and, gripping it with both hands, triumphantly ascend. Once, when I had got as far as the third storey and was still slowly ascending, I heard a familiar footstep in the arched passage that led into the yard. Presently Mr. Smith emerged, and stood staring at me. Of course I could not descend. The men were working on the topmost storey and the winch seemed to be hauling very slowly. As I turned round and round like a goose on a turnspit I caught glimpses far below of a terrible face regarding me. He did not say a word, but stood there till I was safely landed. Then his voice rang out sharp as a pistol-shot. "Henery!" he called, and, turning, walked with long stride up the steps to his office, where I presently followed and had a very bad quarter of an hour.

His wrath, fortunately, had time to cool before another accident befell me in the very same yard. I was always fond of horses and would ride anything. When there was nothing else available I used to mount the leading horse of the team taking out a load or an empty cart from the warehouse. Egress to the street was obtained through a narrow covered passage with just room enough for the massive lorries, as they were called, to pass in and out, with space for a chance passer-by if he didn't mind squeezing himself against the wall. One afternoon, mounted on the leading horse of a loaded lorry, I had ridden midway down the

passage, when Mr. Smith suddenly turned the corner from the street and approached the yard. If I could have got inside the horse I would have done so. Failing that, there was nothing but to go forward, and as Mr. Smith drew himself up against the wall for the team to pass, my foot almost impinged on the purity of his buff waistcoat.

What an expressive face he had! I have never before or since seen any one who could look so eloquently angry and speak never a word. He had a lovely chestnut mare. Bess was her name, and many a gallop I have had with her. When we left Redcross Street and went to King Street there were no stables attached to the office. Mr. Smith coming down in the morning, it fell to my lot, amongst multifarious duties much less agreeable, to take the mare to the livery stable. Riding or driving, we ever reached our destination by a circuitous route, and had to go pretty fast, as prolonged absence might have led to awkward inquiries.

On Fridays the local hide market was held in Gill Street out of London Road. Mr. Smith rode down to the office about ten o'clock to read the letters, and then proceeded to the market. In the mean time I was told off to "mind the mare," which, construed by a well-regulated mind, meant walking her up and down the street for a quarter or sometimes half an hour. I never took that view of my duty. As soon as Mr. Smith was safely in his room immersed in his letters, I shortened the stirrups, got some passer-by to give me a leg-up, and was off at a smart trot, past the Custom House and up Duke Street, a broad and comparatively quiet thoroughfare, where there was opportunity for a spanking trot. I managed to get back in good time, lengthened the stirrups, and when Mr. Smith came

down to set off for the hide market nothing save a tendency to hard breathing on the part of Bess hinted at occurrence of any impropriety.

One morning catastrophe befell. Either I went too far or the correspondence was unusually brief. However it be, when Mr. Smith came down to take horse I was somewhere near the top of Duke Street, a good mile and a half off, riding back rapidly but still too late. When I reached King Street, Mr. Smith, after, as I heard, fuming terribly, had taken a cab and gone off to the market. When he came back, a good hour later, I was quietly leading Bess up and down. He gave me one of his withering glances, but as usual did not speak. The warehouseman was sent down to relieve me. I went upstairs, sat at my desk, and became terribly busy. A terrible voice, three-syllabled in its wrath, called out "Henery!"

"Henery," he said, when I went in to him, "do you want to leave my service?"

"No, sir," I answered.

"Then don't do that again." And there the conversation ended.

There was at hand the severance of my companionship with Bess and the beginning of the end of my connection with hides and valonia. One day there joined the little office staff a young giant, Fred Gough by name. He was the son of a tanner, one of our customers. With the family Mr. Smith cultivated friendly relations which in later years culminated in his marrying Fred's widowed mother. A good-natured, hearty, genial fellow was Fred, gifted with a fine bass voice. In occasional moments of relaxation, when Mr. Smith was on afternoon "'Change," good for an hour's absence, we used to draw round the fireplace and Fred

sang "The Wolf" and other songs of tremendous volume. By a pleasant fiction, he was understood to be my junior. When I saw him stand on a chair and with perfect ease wind the clock over the fireplace I felt my occupation was gone. It was only by planting two press-letter books on the loftiest stool in the office that I was able through a long series of Monday mornings to wind the clock.

Fred immediately forestalled me in the matter of looking after Bess. He took her to the livery stable in the morning and rode her home to Breck Lodge on the occasional evenings when Mr. Smith was going straight from the office to a tea-party or a prayer meeting.

What was even more important was that Fred's appearance in the office crushed out the last hope of opportunity of getting on. There was a time when—Heaven help me!—I quite resigned myself to hides and valonia, was even eagerly looking forward to promotion which, had it come, would have satisfied my aspirations. Shortly after we removed from the musty warehouse to King Street poor old Tunstall broke down, and quitted a world that had grown a homeless place for him. This left a clerical staff composed of myself and the gentleman who combined the functions of cashier and bookkeeper. Mr. Raleigh—George Gordon Raleigh was his full name, possessing a sonorosity which had a great charm for my ear—elected to take Tunstall's place, going out into dank cellars sniffing at hides and burying his nose in valonia dust as he had seen Mr. Smith do. Thus the way was open for me to Raleigh's place, and I cherished the hope that it was to be mine. It was encouraged by two circumstances. One was that a boy was engaged to do some of my work, and I did all Raleigh's. I kept the books, made



out the invoices, and had daily charge of considerable sums of money. I toiled terribly, coming down with preternatural punctuality at nine o'clock in the morning, staying at my desk till seven or eight at night.

Mr. Smith, to do him justice, never said a word to encourage my delusion, and did not increase by a penny a wage by this time risen by slow gradations to the princely sum of ten shillings a week, peradventure twelve and sixpence. I was patient, always naturally inclined to hope for the best and believe in the brightest. For six months I literally slaved at work which had in some measure lost its uncongeniality in presence of greater responsibility and the prospect of promotion. One morning—a Monday morning it was, I remember—there walked into the office a gentleman with sallow face and long red hair lavishly oiled. He went into Mr. Smith's room. Presently Mr. Smith brought him out to the desk at which I was struggling with a day-book nearly as big as myself, and told me in his prim matter-of-fact way that this was Mr. Blossom, and that Mr. Blossom would take Mr. Raleigh's place.

Dear old Blossom, kindest of natures, best of book-keepers, was a man of cultured mind and artistic taste, bubbling over with humour, with keenest, never-ending delight in Dick Swiveller and the Marchioness. If I could, without inconvenience to anybody else, have shot him dead on the spot, I believe I should have done so. In view of all the circumstances, I made believe that it was, as our mutual friend Mr. Toots used to say, "of no consequence," straightway moved over bag and baggage to the other side of the desk, and for the remainder of my office experience sat there, helping Blossom to make invoices and jokes. I never

said a word to Mr. Smith of protest or reproach. Looking back upon the event now, I recognise in it a course of conduct one would not look for in a deacon. It was unrelieved even by the tendering of a five or a ten-pound note in acknowledgment of at least fifty pounds I had saved him in wages. I now see in it the happiest deliverance that ever befell me. It was not only that I, being almost in the toils, was delivered from the destiny of the commercial clerk, but Jacob, my supplanter, was the very man whose help, often given unconsciously, was of priceless value to me at this juncture. Blossom was an omnivorous reader, a man of pronounced literary taste, in whose company I found encouragement and education.

It was no new thing for me to turn my attention towards literature. As soon as I could read I wanted to write, and did so pretty freely. My first serious work, written in my twelfth year, was an essay on King David. Lacking breadth of mind and mature judgment, I was much struck by one side of his character, and that not the most reputable. When after the first month or two in Redcross Street I got on friendly terms with Raleigh, terms that never varied during our long acquaintance, I brought this precious MS. down to the office and inflicted several pages upon him. It was written in a scathing style: the sort of thing that makes one, reflecting in maturer years, glad that King David had passed away so that there was no possibility of his seeing or hearing what I thought of the whole story of his relations with Uriah the Hittite. Raleigh was, or professed to be, deeply shocked at the free handling of the subject.

My next work was a novel. This was chiefly written in my fourteenth year, and, judging from a

fragment I came across many years after, was a particularly base imitation of the worst style of Charles Dickens. I set myself to produce a certain amount of copy every day, or rather every night, for the work was done on my return home from the office. I generally managed in the afternoon, in prolongation of invented inquiry after some invoice or account, to get down to what was then called "the big" Landing Stage. Walking up and down by the side of the bustling river, I thought out incidents and characters in this masterpiece of fiction covering sufficient ground for the night's writing.

About this time I became possessor of a book that had a marked and permanent influence. I think I owe more to it than to any I ever read. It was Smiles' "Self-Help," given to me by Mr. Henry Draper, a tanner from Kenilworth. He was one of Mr. Smith's customers, and sometimes coming into the office when I was in sole charge used to chat with me on other subjects than hides and valonia. I have the book yet with its inscription written in faded ink. Thirty years later, a guest on board the *Teutonic* of that truly great man Thomas Ismay, steaming to Portsmouth to take part in the Naval Review in honour of the visit of the Emperor of Germany, I made the acquaintance of Mr. Smiles. I told him how I had come to read his book, and was glad of the opportunity of expressing the life-long obligation under which it laid me. I learned from it a lesson verified by subsequent experience, that there is no royal road to any goal worth reaching; that the only effective help is self-help.

Having in the circumstances already related finally convinced myself that there was no room for me in Mr. Smith's office, I returned with more deeply rooted

purpose to my old dream of literature. As far as I could see my way, I came to the conclusion that fiction offered the most successful avenue to an established position and ultimate fame. That I should get on somehow I never had the slightest doubt, a confidence not uncommon with boys who think it would be a nice thing to write books. I did not hesitate to say as much to Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton. I had been reading "The Caxtons," "My Novel," and a series of what I am afraid are now forgotten essays, "Caxtoniana." I read everything I could get hold of, but hankered after authoritative direction for a course of study. I wrote to Bulwer Lytton asking him to advise me, apologising for addressing him without being personally acquainted, mentioning in offhand fashion the certainty that some day we should "meet on the ladder of fame." I remember the phrase, because shortly after I had posted the letter it occurred to me that it was maladroitly expressed. Of course, if we were to meet on a ladder, as I would be going up, the author of "My Novel" would be coming down. I do not know whether the same idea struck and affronted Sir Edward Lytton. Certainly he did not answer my letter.

Laying aside the unfinished novel, which I don't think had any plot to speak of, I took to writing short stories, all unknowing that I was attempting what well done is an exceedingly rare accomplishment. I finished two or three and sent them the dreary round of the magazines, with stamps enclosed and a polite request for the return of the MS. if unsuited, a boon in no single instance refused. The first time I saw myself in print was as a poet. The *Liverpool Mercury* in those days had a Poets' Corner, to which for a year or eighteen



months I became an occasional contributor. It was poor stuff, but mine own, and I was much elated to see myself in print with my name fully signed.

Some time before we left Redcross Street, Raleigh had by strategic movements succeeded in getting a daily newspaper taken for office use. He began by paying for it out of his own purse. Then one week, making up the petty cash, he casually slipped in the item, "*Mercury*, 6d." As nothing was said, he boldly went on, and the daily newspaper became an institution. For a long while Mr. Smith loftily ignored it. Raleigh found an opportunity of explaining that it was necessary by reason of the advertisements of sales. It was therefore suffered, but, regarded as light literature, it was anathema. I do not fancy Mr. Smith read much, nothing of modern literature, unless the *Evangelical Magazine*, taken monthly, came under that denomination. His ignorance of what was going on in the world at the time must have been amazing. Since, however, the newspaper was there, and he was paying for it, he by slow degrees became a reader. He would not take it up in the morning and devour its contents as we did. Sometimes in the afternoon, his soul comforted by a mutton chop brought in from a neighbouring eating-house, he would call out, "Henery, let me glance my eye over the *Merk'ry*."

That was his way of putting it, and it was not without signification. Abandoned people like myself, or even George Gordon Raleigh, might, setting aside ledgers and invoices, sit over a frivolous newspaper and read it through. For him, with some consciousness that he was dallying with sin, he might in office hours "glance his eye over" the paper—only one eye, observe. I am afraid that his habit of calling me Henery and, by

way of compensation, cutting out a syllable from *Mercury*, may convey the impression that he was an illiterate man, which was certainly not the case. It was a fashion of pronunciation, perhaps local, but strongly marked.

One afternoon in King Street, nearing the time of my deliverance, I heard the sharp, peremptory voice calling out for "the *Merk'ry*." It that day had published one of my poetical effusions—a bolder flight than usual, something, I think, in blank verse. I had spent a meagre annual holiday at Buxton, nursing a mighty muse amidst its mist-crowned hills. About this time I discovered Poe and read him with avidity. My verse was a spasmodic echo of the story of one of the beautiful and mysterious females who occasionally visited in ethereal form the sympathetic poet. It purported to relate how one of these anonymous maidens had looked me up in the loneliness of the Derbyshire hills and in musical language had bidden me be of good cheer, as eventually all would be well. I carried the *Mercury* into Mr. Smith's office with a sickening apprehension that this female would get me into trouble. In about ten minutes I heard the cry, "Henery!" I went into his room. There he sat, with spectacles on his forehead and the *Mercury* in his hand, folded at the place where my verse stood prominent among the news and notes of the day.

"Is this yours?" he said, his small, bright eyes fixed upon me with piercing gaze.

It was no use denying, so I boldly avowed it. Refixing his spectacles on his nose, he slowly read out the hapless verse line by line. When he came to anything approaching a trope, he inquired "what that meant," and when I explained he asked me "why I



hadn't said so." As for my mysterious maiden, he, so to speak, tore her frail form to shreds.

This lack of sympathy with my literary aspirations was strictly confined to Mr. Smith's room. The outer office was unfeignedly proud of my distinction, and the morning a flash of my verse illuminated the *Mercury* was always a cheerful time. Blossom called me "The Poet," a name which stuck till I left the office, and was used as constantly and as naturally as if it were my surname. Once Blossom alluding to "the Poet" in a business conversation with one of the tanners, a stalwart giant over six feet high, he looked surprised, and said, "Poet, what poet?"

"That one," said Blossom, pointing to me with his pen.

"Well," said the giant, looking down on my few inches, "he's certainly not Longfellow."

Good that for a tanner.

One day—I fancy in the spring of 1863—Blossom suggested that he and I should learn shorthand, so, as he put it, we might write notes to each other across the desk at which we sat. Without definite idea whither the step might lead, I agreed. We bought Pitman's elementary books and set to work. We went on with great energy till we had mastered the alphabet and could form words of one syllable almost as fast and nearly as legibly as if they were written in longhand. This point reached, Blossom fell away. I, beginning to see that if I could not vault into literature over a three-volume novel, I might creep into journalism from the reporter's note-book, resolved to go on. It was peculiarly hard work, since, though reading came to me by nature, writing was always laborious, the work ill-done. The boy or man who cannot write longhand

freely and legibly may never become an adept at shorthand. I never did.

In truth, whilst ranking as a reporter I was something of a fraud in the important matter of shorthand writing. Somehow I got along without conspicuous disaster, though my early experiences included a brief engagement on the gallery staff of the *Times* as *locum tenens* for a man who was away on circuit. What would have happened supposing I had got a late "turn" with Gladstone or Disraeli I do not know, and did not at the time trouble to forecast. I must have had rare good luck, for old Ross, then manager of the *Times* corps—who on the instant took a personal dislike to me, not modified by my, a year or two later, appearing in the Gallery in the position of manager of the *Daily News* corps—had me "on the gridiron" only once, and that for a comparatively minor fault. This genial old gentleman, who, at the time I made his acquaintance, had not spoken to his brother for a quarter of a century, albeit he was a member of the *Times* parliamentary corps, was said to be the only person who ever read through the voluminous daily reports of parliamentary proceedings. He had furnished him every morning a copy of the paper, with every man's turn marked. He carefully studied these, finishing in time to get down to the House by four o'clock, the hour at which the Speaker at the time took the Chair.

Old members of the corps knew quite well when Ross had a good crop of complaints and corrections to make. On such occasions his face was illumined with a cheerful look customarily lacking. As soon as questions were over, he used to take his seat on a bench between the exit from the gallery and the small room in which the *Times* men wrote out their turn.

As the culprits passed out, ignorant of what was in store for them, old Ross called them one by one to sit by him, and, opening out the paper, would descant on their *laches*. This was known in the gallery as "being on the gridiron."

When my turn came Ross pointed to the name of Mr. Ward Hunt, whose speech I had reported, and in a terrible voice said—

"Who is Mr. Ward Hunt?"

"The Chancellor of the Exchequer," I humbly answered, as indeed he was in that year.

"Mr. Ward Hunt," said Ross, with added asperity, "will do very well for the penny papers. To the *Times* he is Mr. W. Hunt; don't forget that."

I never did, though I never understood the force of the objection, or why Mr. Ward Hunt should do for the penny papers. But old Ross was, as the cabman said about Dickens' friend Forster, "a harbitrary gent."

The door-keeper in attendance on the outer Press Gallery was named Wright, an accidental circumstance to which Ross for some unaccountable reason objected. So he called him Smith, or "Smeeth" as he used to pronounce it in his drawling tone.

In the spring of 1864, having mastered the science of phonography and convinced myself that with practice I should speedily be able to take a verbatim report of a speech, I resolutely set myself to obtain an engagement as a reporter. I went the round of the Liverpool offices, going first, I think, to the *Mercury*, where my halting verse had given me some kind of introduction. The editor was courteous, even kindly, but had nothing for me. Last of all, not in despair, because I meant to go on till I succeeded, I called on Edward Russell, then assistant editor of the *Liverpool*

*Post* in collaboration with its gifted, but truculent, proprietor, Mr. Whitty. At the outset this interview promised to end as the others had done. After some talk Russell began to display interest in the matter, asked me to attend a public meeting, write a summarised report and submit it to him. This I did, and he was so far satisfied as to promise that to the first vacancy on the reporting staff I should have a good chance of being appointed. This was great encouragement. But there was a necessary indefiniteness about the arrangement, and whilst it was or was not maturing I looked out in every direction for a chance opening.

In later years I have been the regular recipient of applications from all kinds of people, young and old, who thought that by writing a letter or speaking a word I could forthwith secure their engagement on some first-class journal. It may serve a practical purpose to be precise in detailing the steps by which I finally obtained a footing on the Press.

Amongst these was a letter written to the proprietor of a powerful engine of public opinion which is, I trust, still alive and prosperous. By way of practice with shorthand I took copies of letters I wrote at this epoch, and am able to transcribe this one addressed to the editor of the *Runcorn Observer*. Apparently, I had answered an advertisement for a general utility man, and the proprietor had replied asking if I could also work at case. My answer is dated the 6th of August, 1864—

“DEAR SIR,—In reply to your favour just to hand, I am willing to undertake the duties you enumerate, with the exception of assisting at case. In addition to the ordinary duties of a reporter, I might furnish an



original leading article, or a summary of the news of the week, writing local paragraphs, and, if you wish, keep the books. I shall also be happy to canvas for advertisements and further the interests of the paper as far as lies in my power. The salary I require is 30s. a week."

The *Runcorn Observer*, alas! would have none of me. My lamentable ignorance of the printer's craft proved an insuperable objection. But if the gates of Runcorn (home of chemical manufacture we could almost smell in Liverpool when the wind blew from the east) were closed against me some other would open.

I pegged away making applications whenever I saw an advertisement. If I could not get an opening on a reporting staff, I was ready to take any berth that would open the doors of a newspaper office to me. A correspondence clerk in the office of the *Wolverhampton Chronicle* would not be the rose. But he would be living near it, and I fruitlessly tried for that appointment. I also made formal application for the post of shorthand writer to the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board. The salary was £100 a year, just twice what I was receiving after serving a seven years' apprenticeship to hides and valonia. The providence that shapes our ends would not follow up this particular rough-hewing, and some one sure to be much better qualified for the coveted post secured it.

One day in this month of August I came across an advertisement for a chief reporter on a leading county paper. Considering I had never been even a junior reporter and had absolutely no experience on the Press, this scarcely seemed addressed to me. Nevertheless I

answered it, enclosing a copy of a letter Edward Russell had written to me for use as a reference. This audaciously kind letter settled the business. The leading county paper in search of a chief reporter turned out to be the *Shrewsbury Chronicle*, and Mr. John Watton, the proprietor, was in such a hurry to secure at the modest wage of 30s. a week the paragon Russell's kindly fancy had painted that he telegraphed an engagement, and urged me to join with the least possible delay.



## IV

### FIRST ENGAGEMENT ON THE PRESS

ON August 22, 1864, I arrived in Shrewsbury with all my worldly goods in a tin box, bought at a second-hand shop in Dale Street, Liverpool. They did not amount to much. In money I had a trifle over the five pounds Mr. Smith, in an ungovernable fit of generosity, presented me with. I had no introductions, did not know a soul in the town. I left my luggage at the railway station and walked along High Street, asking my way to the *Chronicle* office, which I found in a quaint old street that greatly charmed my young fancy. I walked up and down the opposite side once or twice, before, plunging in, I announced myself and my engagement. The outer door opened on to a kind of shop that served for the publishing office. Behind the counter was a spectacled man with bushy whiskers, whom I subsequently knew as the publisher. I explained my business. He stared at me for a moment through his glasses; then he said, "Oh!" After which he looked at me again, and when the pause was growing embarrassing added, "You'd better come and see Mr. Watton."

He led the way to a room on the right-hand side of the passage, and presented me to the editor and proprietor of the leading county paper. It was an odd coincidence, and I felt it a little discouraging, that

Mr. Watton, on my being announced, said "Oh!" in almost the same tone the publisher had adopted, looking me over in the same incredulous and dissatisfied manner. There was no doubt I did not in any degree come up to their ideas of what the chief reporter of a leading county paper should look like. Though turned twenty, I did not look more than sixteen or seventeen. Had I happened to present myself in jacket and trousers I might have passed for a schoolboy.

Some time later, in a moment of confidence, the publisher told me that Mr. Watton was very angry at what he was inclined to regard as an imposition, and resolved forthwith to give me notice. He did not, and when in a surprisingly short time I, having mounted to the dizzy heights of editor and part-proprietor of another paper, gave *him* notice, he, not aware of my budding greatness, caused it to be intimated to me in diplomatic fashion that if I were leaving on account of salary the difficulty would be adjusted.

Watton was a curious little man, spare in figure and, I fancied, born old. He came into the property of the *Chronicle* as the son of his father, and, being there, edited the paper. A shy, nervous, restless man, he shut himself up in his room and spoke seldom to any one in the office. There was a sub-editor, a poor fellow dying of consumption, who used to cough terribly on publishing nights. There was a district reporter, stationed at Welshpool, who was wont to cast around Thursday nights, when the paper should go to press, a halo of romantic interest. He usually had the proceedings at a farmer's ordinary to report, a flower show, a cattle show, or a meeting of county Members with their constituents to describe. He was an honest, hard-working Welshman, with a large family and a

positive passion for sherry. If he got within reach of a sherry decanter on any of these festive occasions, either his report did not turn up at all, or it arrived opening pretty fairly, gradually deepening into absolute incoherency. Many an hour have I spent trying to make a connected story out of this gentleman's copy, having in the final folios no hints save a few hieroglyphs. When he was very bad indeed he used to drop into Welsh, which for all practical purposes was quite as useful to me as the English which marked the advancing depletion of the sherry decanter. He had, I learned, been many years on the paper, and he was there when I left it.

Another person who much impressed me in this my earliest acquaintance with the Press was the overseer of the printing-office. His name, when he first came to the office, was Smith. After a while he took to spelling it Smyth, and when I arrived he had come to be addressed as Mr. Smythe. In personal appearance he was singularly like an elderly Dick Swiveller. The paper coming out on Friday morning, he made holiday on Saturday. He made a point of swaggering up and down High Street on fine Saturday afternoons, ogling the shop-girls and maid-servants. He wore a frock-coat tightly drawn in at the waist. I believe on Saturdays he secreted stays. His hands were covered with dirty gloves, often yellow, sometimes lavender, in hue. He had a glistening pin fastening a many-coloured scarf, displayed under a dirty linen collar. The crowning grace of his figure was a white hat with a deep black band. With this set rakishly over his right ear, and a tasselled cane swung negligently in his gloved hand, Smythe was a credit to the paper. He was a cheery gentleman, with a loud somewhat stagey

laugh, accompanied by well-considered flourishes of his right arm and easy bending of his knees. A remarkable character whose individuality remains vividly stamped on my memory.

My first work on the *Chronicle* was a rather serious undertaking. There was an annual review of the Yeomanry, or Militia, at which all the county gathered. Except for the account of a meeting in Liverpool written at Mr. Russell's suggestion, I had never before attempted reporter's work. I got through somehow, as I did with whatever else fell to my share in the miscellaneous work of the office. There was a Tuesday paper, an offshoot of the *Chronicle*. It had a single leading article, which Mr. Watton generally wrote himself. After I had been on the staff four or five weeks I wrote one, furtively dropped it in the letter-box, and was greatly elated at finding it in the next issue of the paper. Mr. Watton dissembled his joy, making no reference to the little incident, though he must have recognised the handwriting.

There was at this time in Shrewsbury a miserable little weekly sheet called *The Observer*, published on Saturdays, at the price of a penny. It had no leading article, and its local news was "conveyed" from the pages of its more prosperous neighbours. The proprietor was a stationer in High Street, of whose full style, boldly displayed over the window, it will be sufficient to mention the Christian name, which was Peter. I wrote a column of notes on news, sent it to Peter, and proposed to furnish a similar contribution weekly for a payment of ten shillings. Anxious to meet any particular views he might entertain, I offered to make the contribution either a leader, a column of notes, or a London letter, written, of course, from



Shrewsbury. My communication was anonymous, and I asked Peter, if he thought anything of the project, to address me under certain initials in the correspondence column of his paper. I opened the *Observer* on the following Saturday, and there were my notes on news in the dignity of leader type, and a couple of lines asking "L.H." to call and see the proprietor. The result of this communication was that I became a regular contributor to the editorial columns of the *Observer* at a salary of 10s. a week.

There was nothing particular in the writing except that it dealt with local subjects in a fashion untrammelled by the personal considerations that weigh with the editors and proprietors of newspapers in small country towns. A new system of sewage was at the time greatly agitating the mind of the ratepayers. Simultaneously the Northern and Southern States of America were at each other's throats across the Atlantic. The secret designs of Napoleon III. were not above suspicion. The *Chronicle*, having its principal leading article sent down by luggage train from London, was pointed and graphic in its commentary on the latest battle between the Federals and Confederates, and was deep in the mysteries of the mind of Napoleon III. But the people of Shrewsbury primarily wanted to know all about the new sewage system and the proposed Market Hall, and when they found these matters discussed in the columns of the *Observer*, with occasional hard raps distributed among disputants on the Town Council, they rushed to buy the paper. Its sale went up in inspiring fashion, and I had the satisfaction of hearing many ask who was the new writer? Peter kept the secret, and so did I. Finally, gossip was divided between two well-known local personages, one

a stockbroker with a literary turn, the other a militant Nonconformist minister.

Encouraged by this success, I opened in the same way communications with the proprietor of a paper at the neighbouring town of Wellington, called the *Shropshire News*. After some correspondence, I arranged with him to write a weekly article at the rate of 10s. 6d. a week. Peter, growing rash with the bounding prosperity of the *Observer*, proposed that I should write two articles a week, throwing them in for 15s. The *Shropshire News* was published on Thursday, the *Chronicle* on Friday, the *Observer* on Saturday. Thus by working hard—and I liked the work—I managed to keep things going. In addition, I was the local correspondent of the principal daily papers in London, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, and Leeds. At the end of 1864 I find in the shorthand diary I then kept a triumphant note showing that I had more than doubled my income, my modest 30s. a week from the *Chronicle* being supplemented by a larger sum made after I had done my office work.

The articles in the *Shropshire News* did not attract so much attention as those in the *Observer*, but the proprietor, a sterling, honest man, was satisfied. He, of course, did not know I was also the *Observer's* scribe, and once wrote me a kindly note to say that for his part he thought the *News* leaders were as good as the *Observer's*, indeed he liked them better.

“They are more solid,” he dubiously said.



## V

### EDITOR AND PART-PROPRIETOR

IN January, 1865, Peter began to hint proposals for an open and closer connection with the *Observer*. I did not altogether like his business ways. The considerably increased revenues of the paper did not with perfect regularity run in the direction of producing my weekly 15s. Peter never said "No" when I looked in for money on the Saturday afternoon, nor did he make any excuse for delay, nor promise of early payment. He used to lean one elbow on the shop counter, and in his low tone, with a peculiar smile on his thin lips, a far-away look in his watery-blue, small eyes, he changed the subject.

In addition to his temporal concerns in High Street, Peter was a local preacher. He was always dressed in black, rather rusty in colour but clerical in cut. He also appeared, weekday and Sunday, in a white neckcloth. The dreamy look that overcast his countenance when I mentioned my 15s., in conjunction with his reflective attitude supported by the counter, was, I fancy, reminiscent of his pulpit manner. However it be, my wages were always in arrear till I hit upon the idea of taking them out in books. To this Peter made no objection, and I dare say I got much more benefit from this method of payment than if he

had awakened out of his reverie and handed me the pieces of silver. I have at this day a copy of Tennyson's poems, bound in calf (price 18s.), of which I thus became possessed. Also a delightful pocket edition of Shakespeare, bound in red morocco, bearing the imprimatur of Bradbury, Evans & Co., Bouverie Street. I often wondered since, sitting at the *Punch* table with my old friend William Bradbury in the vice-chair, whether Peter ever paid for the book? I am afraid not.

As a result of many conversations, Peter and I came to an understanding. I would undertake the editorship of the *Observer* only on condition that I had a share in the property. It was finally arranged that I was to be editor and manager at a salary of £150 a year; that I was to become part-proprietor, paying down a sum of £50 and contributing to capital not less than £50 a year. I find these particulars in the shorthand diary I kept at this time. Either the entries are incomplete or the proceedings were extremely hazy. What share in the concern I was to undertake or what was the estimated value of the property does not appear. I had no one to advise me, and seem to have taken the initiative in carrying out the arrangement. I got a little handy volume of the "Law of Partnership," which I carefully studied. I drew up a form of agreement embodying our proposals, which, after much shilly-shallying, Peter signed.

All being ready, I gave Mr. Watton notice to leave the *Chronicle*, and, being free from the engagement, set to work to start the *Observer* on a new basis. It came out in enlarged form in March of this year (1865), the circulation going up in exhilarating fashion. The movement was steadily maintained through several

weeks. There is no doubt that, had I had assistance in the commercial department, the enterprise would have succeeded, and I should have lapsed into the proprietorship of a country paper. Outside the printing-room there was literally nobody but myself. I did the editing, sub-editing, reporting, leader-writing, reading of proofs, and collecting of advertisements. Early in our career I not only saw the paper to press at any hour between midnight and two in the morning, but I stayed on the premises till at least sufficient sheets were pulled off the machine to meet the early local demand.

A primitive hand-press, worked by a large flywheel sufficed for the needs of the paper in its early days. The circulation was now large enough to justify a steam press, and one was ordered. For the first week or two we had the hand-press worked by relays of men. As I found that the relays were in the habit of simultaneously withdrawing for intervals of rest, and as there was no one else to look after them, I spent the night between the editorial room and the cellar where the edition was being ground out. Afterwards we had a steam press and a very smart engineer, and I was relieved from this addition to miscellaneous duties.

The first issue of what was practically the new paper came out on Saturday, April 29, 1865. I find in my diary the entry: "Up all night at work. About four o'clock this morning I asked Peter's son, who had undertaken the overseership of the printing-office, how much more there was to set. 'Five columns,' said he. That, with our staff, would bring the paper out about noon. Told him to put in some blocks; got the paper out soon after eight o'clock, looking very nice and with

a show of advertisements that will astonish some people."

That this complacency was not altogether due to parental prejudice may perhaps appear from two letters out of some dozen that came from outside to cheer me in my work. I select them as they are from gentlemen whose names are known outside Shrewsbury. Dr. Kennedy, then Headmaster of the School, wrote prophesying great things for me in the profession on which I was just entering. The other letter is from Mr. Samuel Lucas, a member of the *Times* staff in Delane's day, to me at that time a bright star in Journalism.

"6, CORK STREET, BURLINGTON GARDENS,  
"LONDON, *July* 11, 1865.

"Let me say—and it is no insincere compliment—that I have never seen a provincial journal better digested and edited, and more full of interesting matter than yours is. If you ever pay a visit to London, I should be very happy to see you and to make your acquaintance."

I am sorry to say I never found opportunity of clasping the hand thus kindly held out to an unknown beginner.

Matters seem to have improved by the next week. I find the entry in my journal: "Got away from the office a little before five this morning"—that is, of course, having been at work all the previous day and up all night. Before a month had sped I began to see the impossibility of accomplishing the task I had undertaken with so light a heart. Working all through the day, far into the night on Wednesdays and Thursdays,

all night on Fridays, I kept the thing going, even improved its position.

Here is the testimony of a paper of high standing on the Welsh border. I cut out the extract and plastered it over some of the wounds dealt me by Peter, with his imperturbability, his flashes of shiftiness, and the absolute incompetency of his precious son. Said the *Oswestry Advertiser* in an editorial note: "The literary air of Shropshire seems to be unusually brisk at present. In Oswestry we have a new magazine announced, and in Shrewsbury a couple of newspapers commenced. Perhaps I should not say commenced in both cases, for one, the *Shrewsbury Observer*, has been in existence for some two or three years, although its existence was, until lately, all but unknown out of the town. My first acquaintance with it I noticed at the time, and since then I have seen several numbers, and have, from their very novelty in a Shrewsbury paper, been attracted by the tone and execution of the leading articles. Well, on Saturday last, the *Observer* came out as a full-blown eight-sheet paper, and issued one of the most manly and straightforward prologues that it has ever been my lot to see in a country paper. The editor very cleverly describes the old-fashioned leading county paper that once held the sway, and still believes itself to be of leading importance in these terms:

"'Years ago, when John Walter was working at case, and meditating on the birth of *The Times*, the *Sleepy Sentinel* first mounted guard; and, like a faithful soldier, on guard he has remained till this hour, with little of change about him except that in these bright bustling days his sleepiness is more noticeable than of yore. The founder is gathered to his fathers, but the property is handed down with the chairs and tables



from generation to generation ; and sons and heirs, who might have made good tradesmen or passable farmers, find themselves in the position of a newspaper editor. They conduct the *Sentinel* because their father did it before them, and people buy the lively publication, partly from analogous reasons, but principally because they have no choice in the matter !”

I might have staggered along under the weight of the *Observer*, but I could not also carry Peter *père et fils*. Except in writing leaders on all possible subjects, work that came to me by nature, I had to feel my way at every step. Nine months earlier I had never been inside a printing-office, had no experience of newspaper work, either editorial or managerial. Now I was both editor and manager, without a friend to whom I might turn for counsel or instruction. I pegged away, and would doubtless have gone on till I had physically broken down but for a harmless little incident in Peter's career. He had reached the end of his financial tether, lengthened a little by my £50, and was, as with his ineffable smile he one morning informed me, “going through the Bankruptcy Court.”

In my ignorance I declared that he should not drag the *Observer* with him, my poor progeny that was, in spite of all, beginning to feel its feet. Peter's creditors chiefly lived in London, and, learning that a meeting was fixed for a particular day, I resolved to attend it. I posted off to London and found the office where the meeting was held. I do not know now where it was situated, but well remember walking into the room and finding half a dozen gentlemen sitting round a table discussing Peter and the possibility of pocketing any of his pence. I think I took high ground with them ; told them how I had created the paper and was even



part-proprietor. This last piece of information staggered them. Peter had evidently not thought the circumstances worth mentioning in drawing up a statement of his affairs. After a little conversation, an old gentleman, who seemed to be the chairman, whose kindly face I still recall looking at me with pitying glance, told me that Peter had been bankrupt for considerably more than a year, months before he had taken my ewe lamb of £50. The deed of our partnership was incomplete, informal, even unstamped, not worth the paper it was written on.

And this after my study of the shilling book setting forth the whole law of partnership, and my consultation with Peter on quiet Sabbath evenings when he came home from his preaching!

The old gentleman tried to cheer me by congratulating me on this state of things; for, as he said, had I been legally in partnership with Peter, I too must have been sold up. He advised me not to say anything to any one in Shrewsbury about the deed of partnership, to go away and make the best of a bad job. I am not sure whether this excellent and kindly advice was given before a leading question had drawn from me the admission that I had no more capital at my disposal. I always hope it was.

## VI

### PRIVATE SECRETARY

THIS was a pretty fair start in life. Within seven months I had made my *début* on the Press, had climbed to the dizzy height of editorship, then suddenly, as at the moment appeared hopelessly, tumbled down. It was no use complaining, much less folding one's hands and waiting for something good to run up against one. I had a friend in Shrewsbury whose sincerity circumstance had already tested. This was Richard Samuel France, a name well known in the railway world in 1863-5. Son of a farmer, and having inherited the ancestral estates, he raised a little money by selling a portion of them for the purposes of a railway then making its way from Shropshire into North Wales. The contractor came to a difficult point in the construction of the line, stumbled, bungled, and finally broke down. France, who had had no previous training for the work, thought he saw how it should be done, boldly took up the dropped contract, and triumphantly completed the line.

It was a period of considerable excitement in the railway and financial world. A powerful London syndicate put their money on France, and he began to make railways right and left. Two of them exist to this day, being known as the Shrewsbury and North Wales, and the Wrexham, Mold, and Connah's Quay

lines. France moved to Shrewsbury, purchased a big house and grounds, was elected to the Town Council, pressed to become mayor, might have been member for the borough if an election had turned up handy. A man of great natural ability, a fluent speaker, a terrible slogger in Town Council debate, with an open hand and a frank, handsome countenance, he was for a while the idol of Shrewsbury. He was attracted by the first series of articles in the *Observer* dealing with local affairs with an absence of circumlocution unfamiliar in the elder Press.

Whilst the authorship of the articles was unsuspected, France, who as a public man knew the chief reporter of the county paper, often spoke to me about them and asked me why the *Chronicle* did not do something like that. When I determined to throw in my lot with Peter, I revealed to France my identity with the anonymous writer. He, in his downright hearty manner, at once volunteered to lend me any capital that was necessary to establish my co-partnership in the *Observer*. He asked me how much I wanted to begin with. I said £50. He was astonished at my moderation, and so indeed was Peter when I related the incident to him. Peter would dearly have liked to get his fat hand into France's capacious purse, and it is clear enough now that knowledge of my friendly relations with the great railway contractor considerably smoothed the advancing stages of our agreement. I accepted the money from France as a loan. When within a couple of years I had earned the money in other fields, I sent it to him and had it promptly returned with a kind and generous note. In later years, when the railway boom was over, and France was no longer a wealthy man, I found an opportunity of again pressing it on his

acceptance. He was even more resolute, and so to the end of the chapter it was his money that Peter pouched.

France happened to be in London at the very time I confronted Peter's creditors. Next morning I called at his hotel. He was not up, but gave orders for my admission to his bedroom, and there I unfolded my tale.

"It's very awkward for you," he said, "but it's the very thing for me. I was just wanting a private secretary. Come along, and your salary commences from to-day at £150 a year."

Here was a sudden turn of events. I was falling, as it seemed, into abyss of poverty, and here I was, landed on my feet in Eldorado. I had never had a salary of £150 in my life. This time last year I weltered on a wage of 20s. a week; in August it rose to 30s. Then, it is true, I had within four months reached an income averaging £150 a year. But it was made up of items, some precarious. It is also true I had been assured a salary of £150 a year as editor of the *Observer*. But Peter's habit, already alluded to, of changing the subject when I called for my weekly wage, had a serious tendency towards heaping up arrears. When the bankruptcy bolt fell, Peter was my debtor for many weeks' salary.

I was not long in discovering that France's urgent and imperative need for a private secretary was the growth of the moment and was practically imaginative. He had a large staff of clerks, both in London and Shrewsbury, and though he sometimes amused himself and gratified me by dictating a few business letters, my post was a sinecure. Occasionally he took it out of me by reciting long passages from Walter Scott. "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" was his idea of the



embodiment of the highest form of poetry. It was not mine; but he was so good and kind, and it gave him such pleasure to stream off whole cantos, that I listened with becoming interest. He used to like me to look in at the Hall late at night after the last post had gone, and we talked about books. He smoked a pipe, I a cigarette, and am afraid drank claret with it. I often stayed with him till two o'clock in the morning. I suppose, with the increasing pressure of his vast business upon his mind, he found recreation in this sort of thing.

As France was frequently in London, leaving me in Shrewsbury, where I had not even the pretence of doing anything for my salary, I suggested that I should go into the office and do some of the clerks' work endeared to me in hide and valonia days. He laughed, assented, and gave me a desk in his private office, where I was understood vaguely to "check accounts." Practically I was master of my own time. I used it to strengthen and widen the foundations of a very useful business. Even while slaving on the *Observer* I kept up my connection with the daily papers in London and the large towns in the Midlands and North of England.

At this time Shrewsbury happened to be the cynosure of public eyes, owing to the escapade of a young man who for a while enjoyed world-wide fame under the name of John Morgan. Serving time in Swansea goal, on being released he made his leisurely way northward. Arrived at Shrewsbury, it occurred to him to represent himself as a detective from Cardiff with a warrant for the apprehension of a certain Mr. Ashworth. Visiting the Raven Hotel, where the best company was likely to be found, the Cardiff detective had the good fortune to find his man. Being arrested, Mr. Ashworth loudly



protested he was not the person wanted by the Cardiff police, but was the son of a well-known magistrate in Manchester. John Morgan smiled. He had heard that kind of thing before. The landlord shook his head, and the young gentleman was taken down to the police office.

John Morgan so arranged the time of his visit to the hotel that the borough magistrates were sitting. Before them the prisoner was haled, still protesting that he was Mr. Ashworth of Manchester. The experienced Cardiff detective smiled again. The sapient magistrates on the bench almost winked in response to his knowing look, and in accordance with his demand the prisoner was remanded till the next day.

John Morgan took charge of the prisoner's keys, and, in the ordinary run of his duty, returned to the hotel, carefully examined his portmanteau, and, packing up everything valuable and portable, left town by the next train. An hour later came telegrams from Manchester establishing the identity of Mr. Ashworth, who was forthwith released.

I was in the police court when John Morgan brought his victim in, and witnessed the whole proceedings. When the *dénouement* arrived I put the story into a paragraph, and sent it to as many of the morning papers as trains would reach that night. I had all the field to myself, since there was then neither Press Association nor Central News. The telegraphs were still a private monopoly, little used for country news. I had a book of "flimsy," and with this succeeded in communicating with a dozen or more papers. The paragraph duly appeared, and the country rang with laughter. John Morgan became the hero of the day, and every line or scrap about him was eagerly printed. I did my best to

satisfy public appetite, and not only made what was to me a small fortune in ready money, but established a footing with the daily Press throughout the country that made me independent of anything else.

This was the more fortunate as the end of my friend France's gallop was close at hand. It was vaguely understood in Shrewsbury that the state of the money market precipitated catastrophe. However it came about, the still unfinished works of his railway were abandoned. The curtain fell over the busy scene in his colossal workshops at Abbeygate. Bills were put up in the windows at the Hall, France withdrew to a little freehold estate he managed to retain in the Montgomeryshire hills. Shrewsbury began to agree that, after all, he was not such a clever fellow as it had thought him, and that some of the townspeople would have done well not to pay him obsequious court. Out of the wreck of his fortune he further saved a plot of land that yielded rock and lime. This he managed himself and lived pretty comfortably. In later years he came to live in London, and the friendship begun under circumstances so honourable to him was preserved to the last.

## VII

### PENNY A LINER

WHEN my salary—I cannot say my duties—as France's private secretary ceased, I was once more adrift. As heretofore temporary disaster led me to discover and improve upon opportunity for bettering my position. I was the recognised Shrewsbury correspondent of all the principal daily papers far and near, and Shrewsbury began to assume a frequency in the news columns of the daily papers which the ancient town probably regarded with mixed feelings. The scope was naturally limited. In giving birth to the John Morgan episode, Shrewsbury seemed to have exhausted its possibilities. The only thing to do was to go further afield. Accordingly, I enlarged my borders till I appropriated as my district not only the whole of Shropshire, but Herefordshire, Worcestershire, Montgomeryshire, and North Wales.

Governor Eyre's trial in connection with the Jamaica riots, the preliminaries of which fortuitously took place before a bench of Shropshire magistrates, was an opportunity of which I made the most. Hardinge Giffard, afterwards Sir Hardinge, later Lord Halsbury, Lord High Chancellor, was the leading counsel for the defence. He greatly impressed my inexperienced mind by passing from an outbreak of eloquence to a burst of tears as he defended his client. At this day it is

curious to think that the great daily papers, including those of London, should have left the reporting of a case like this to a local correspondent. They did, and I reaped a golden harvest out of their confidence. In this case I tried at higher game than ordinary reporting. Deeply impressed with the surroundings of the case, the local colouring of the quiet Shropshire magistrate's court, above all with Hardinge Giffard bubbling into tears, I wrote a description of the scene and sent it to the *Daily News*, in addition to my ordinary report taken in common by other papers. Special correspondence of the kind which came in with a rush after the Franco-German war was then unknown. My article, which appeared next day in large type, was quite a novel feature, I sharing the feeling of novelty by receiving a cheque for four guineas. I thought this must be a mistake, or at least intended to cover my ordinary reporting account. That was remitted in full in due time.

Colliery explosions, railway accidents, murders, and trials for murder were carefully attended to. It was, when one comes to think of it, rather ghoulish work. Once a report appeared in the *Times* of an outbreak of cholera in a little town on the borders of Cheshire. There was question whether it really was cholera, and to what extent it prevailed. Going over to inquire, I made the acquaintance of a rosy-cheeked doctor, who obligingly took me round in his gig to see all the worst cases. It was at best a poverty-stricken town, with the very streets falling away from it, threatened with submersion in the salt-mine over which it was built. Now, with cholera stealthily passing up and down its thoroughfares, lurking in its back-yards, it was unspeakably gruesome. The only bright thing in it was



the rosy-cheeked doctor who went bustling in and out of the houses, as if there was nothing worse going on than measles.

In the quarter we visited there were no knockers to knock, nor bells to ring. You lifted the latch and walked in, generally on to the stone floor of the kitchen. I remember, as well as if it were yesterday, following the doctor into one of these kitchens and finding an old woman lying back in a big beehive-shaped cane chair, set by an almost empty firegrate. She was all alone. The neighbours, she querulously complained, knew she "was bad," and would not come near her.

"Yes, she's bad enough," said the doctor when we left. "She'll be dead in two hours. Did you notice her face was growing blue?"

When I got back to Shrewsbury I did not mention to any one that I had been investigating cases of cholera. It was a foolish, even a wrong, thing to do. But I was young and enthusiastic when I commenced journalism.

I dwelt in Shrewsbury for five years, on the whole a bright and happy life. I knew everybody, everybody knew me, and most people were uncommonly kind. It came to pass years after that I used to receive letters and Christmas cards from people in Shrewsbury whose names I had forgotten, who talked of times when I lived there. I had a pretty house and garden, agreeable work, sometimes highly paid. In the third or fourth year I did not earn less than £300 a year, was subject to no man's rule, dependent on no man's favour, master of my own time. As far as I knew the provincial Press, mine was the most enviable position on it. But the lights of London fascinated me.

I remember the first time I went to London, bent



on assisting at the deliberation of Peter's creditors. Night had fallen when the train approached the Metropolis. As we neared the City I leaned out of the window and had a good look at its far-spreading sheet of twinkling lights. It seemed a familiar friend to me. I had no more doubt that some day I would live there a renowned journalist, than if I had already rooms and an established position on the staff of a leading paper.

It was all very well to pass a life of comparative leisure, even of luxury. It did not satisfy me. Gradually I arrived at a conclusion which, when formed, seemed the most natural thing in the world. I resolved to give up my connection with the daily Press, my snug £300 a year, which I had built up out of nothing, my comfortable home, my circle of friends, and go out into the world to seek a new fortune. I fancy I had in my mind Oliver Goldsmith's trip across the Continent, fluting for his daily bread, seeing men and things. Wherever the idea came from, my fixed intention was to spend three or four years on the Continent, giving at least a year each to France, Germany, and Italy, acquiring a knowledge of the languages, studying the people, their customs and their history. As I always meant to gain an exceptionally high position in journalism, nothing less than this foundation would satisfy me.

Of course, it meant considerable expenditure of money, and I had not much. Besides, there were others dependent upon me. My father had not yet found a market for his process of preserving cut flowers, and things so turned out that I was the mainstay of the home circle. Whatever happened to me, that weekly contribution must, as long as I lived, be set aside. I had saved about £200. My furniture I

estimated, correctly as it turned out, would bring over £100, and when my capital was all gone I would have to look out for means of earning more. Anyhow, I was determined to go, and in the early spring of 1869 I bade farewell to Shrewsbury. Before I left I apportioned my engagements amongst my colleagues on the local Press, securing for each man the correspondence of a certain number of papers. It did not seem to do them much good. The £300 a year melted like snow on the river. When a year later I had opportunity of inquiring how much money was drawn into Shrewsbury from this source, I found it did not reach an aggregate of £20 per annum.

## VIII

### A STRUGGLING JOURNALIST

WHEN I bade farewell to Shrewsbury and fared forth in search of fortune, I did not dream that later I should return to the dear old town, the honoured guest of the sitting member, to be entertained at dinner by the mayor, who bade to the feast the headmaster of the famous school and the principal citizens. The quittance was equivalent to burning my boats. In the world beyond the ancient walls of Shrewsbury I had no friends, few acquaintances, no visible opening.

Meanwhile, I had been invited by Walter Wood of the *Standard* to stay at his house in London for a short while before my hegira. He lived in the neighbourhood of Hammersmith. I arrived at Euston Station and spent an appreciable portion of an afternoon in a four-wheeler driving towards the setting sun. Often as I pass by Hyde Park Terrace I can see the old growler stumbling along with a pale-faced youth inside, and on the roof, in portmanteau, box, and bundle, all his worldly goods. Still acuter is the recollection of the dismayed face of my hostess peering through the parlour window upon this array of luggage that seemed to portend at least a month's visit. On closer intimacy I gathered that Walter, one of the kindest-hearted men in the world, was accustomed to make chance acquaintances, bringing them home to dine and sleep. His

harried wife speedily got over her natural apprehension, and it was at her entreaty that I more than once deferred my departure for the Continent.

Even in those early days the height of my ambition was to obtain an engagement in the Parliamentary Press Gallery. That might come by-and-by. Meanwhile, I yearned for opportunity of looking on the House from behind the Speaker's chair. Walter Wood, whom no difficulties cowed, said he would see what could be done. In those days the adventure was far more difficult than in existing circumstances. The country Press was not represented save vicariously in the form of a rare London correspondent, who wrote a weekly letter for some phenomenally enterprising paper. The aggregate of the London staffs was far smaller than at present, and was, it struck me at the time, composed almost exclusively of elderly gentlemen. The chances of detection of an unauthorised stranger (being moreover a beardless youth) were accordingly increased.

One night Walter Wood took me down to the Gallery and endeavoured to induce more than one of the old stagers to pilot me in. They stared aghast at the proposal, and walked hurriedly away. We were permitted to stand at the glass door giving entrance to the Gallery and peer upon the House, which was nearly empty. The door swung easily to and fro as the men passed in and out, taking their turn in the box. The temptation proved irresistible.

"I think I'll go in," I said.

"Very well," dear old Walter hoarsely whispered. "Turn to the right, sit down on a back bench, and I dare say no one will notice you."

At the corner of the bench, presumably guarding

the doorway, sat a portly gentleman in evening dress, with a gold badge slung across his abundant shirt-front. He was fast asleep, and I passed along the bench, sitting down midway. At that time there were no desks in front of these back benches, which were tenantless. I suppose my heart beat tumultuously, but I sat there with apparent composure. At length I had reached the House of Commons, and eagerly gazed upon it, feeling like some watcher of the skies when a new planet swims into his ken,

“Or like stout Cortez when, with eagle eyes,  
He stared at the Pacific.”

I do not know how long I sat there. Probably not five minutes, certainly long enough to be struck with the smallness of the chamber, the commonplace appearance of the personages forming the historic assembly, and the perfect manner in which they dissembled their interest in current proceedings. Then I became conscious of a movement in the sunken boxes before me, where the reporters taking notes sat. Heads were turned, whispered consultations took place. Some one woke up the portly gentleman whom through many years later I knew as Steel, the chief janitor of the Press Gallery.

In days then far off he became possessor of a cottage and garden in Kent, whither, wearied with legislative labours, he retired from Saturday to Monday. In summer time he brought me on Monday afternoons two or three roses, which he put in my hand with an awkward sort of flap, as if they were a slice of bacon he was depositing on a counter. That was his way of intimating that it was of no consequence. He noticed that I always comforted myself through long debates



and all-night sittings with a handful of flowers, set in a little glass on my desk, which was generally upset in the course of the evening by some unsympathetic reporter borrowing my box during temporary absence, and clumsily turning round in the circumscribed space.

It was no flowers that Steel now brought me, but stern peremptory command to "get out." He was unusually irate, first at having been wakened out of his sleep, secondly at having in unique circumstances been caught napping at the post of duty. I went forth disconsolate, and there was a great hubbub in the dark little room outside. My friend and co-conspirator fled in affright when he saw me actually enter the Gallery. Now he dropped in, in a casual way, standing at the edge of the crowd, whilst Steel took down my name and address, and told me I should "hear from the Serjeant-at-Arms."

I do not know whether that potentate ever knew of the incident. I fancy Steel, recognising his own somewhat imperilled position, was not anxious to pursue the matter. Anyhow, I never heard from the Serjeant-at-Arms. Walter Wood and I agreed, as a matter of precaution, that I had better hasten my departure for Paris, and two days later the English Channel rolled between me and the Clock Tower.

I hoped to be able to eke out my living in Paris by doing some writing for the London Press. Expectation centred chiefly on the *Daily News*, which freely accepted my copy sent from Shrewsbury. I called at Bouverie Street and sent in my card to my frequent correspondent, the manager. J. R. Robinson was his name, and our early intercourse threatened to close in storm. His handwriting was execrable, his signature after prolonged study suggesting divers readings. In communicating

with him I timidly tried these in succession, and at the end of a fortnight, the pot of patience bubbling over, I received a letter with the signature "J. R. Robinson" written in approach to the style of printed letters.

When I was admitted to the manager's room I found the great man behind a pair of spectacles, intent on writing. On a chair drawn up by the fire was the copy of an evening paper. I had at the moment a shrewd suspicion, confirmed by subsequent knowledge of Robinson's custom of an afternoon, that when I knocked at the door he was seated by the fire cosily engaged with the paper. Dreading to be bored with a long interview by an importunate visitor, he, in order to cut it short, hurriedly returned to his desk and assumed an attitude of absorbing engagement. Nothing came of the afternoon call. Robinson said the usual things about having a staff correspondent in Paris, and dismissed me as speedily as possible.

I met with a more friendly reception in another quarter, where I had less claim. Mr. Dymond, manager of the *Morning Star* then still shining, received me in kindest manner, giving me a personal introduction to Mr. North Peat, the *Star's* Paris correspondent, which proved most valuable. I took with me the address of a quiet little hotel in Paris, and drove thither on my arrival after a terrible crossing. There were few passengers who braved the storm. I recollect one on account of his remarkable prevision. He was a stout Frenchman with a pallid face that grew greener and greener in hue as the cliffs of Dover faded in the misty distance. As soon as he came aboard in Dover Harbour he selected a seat on the bench amidship, produced a serviette of the proportions of a mainsail, tied it round his neck,

ordered the steward to bring him a basin, and sat expectant. He had done his best. The rest was in the hands of Providence.

I rather prided myself on my French, in which tongue I was wont glibly to converse with my teacher in Liverpool. I got along pretty well with the *cocher*, and through the dinner at the Hotel. Later the hostess, a motherly looking woman, approached me with an unlit candle in her hand and let fly with unfamiliar cadence a torrent of words, of the meaning of which I had not the faintest glimmer. However, I nodded, and said, "Oui, oui, madame; vous avez raison." Regarding me with a motherly look, a universal language I understood, she set down the candle and went off. Ten minutes later she was back, and, with increased volubility, poured forth another stream. I responded "Oui, oui, madame," with an air of intensified conviction, and she walked off, this time more slowly, looking back several times. In less than ten minutes she was back again, and, still smiling, slowly said, "Il-faut-aller-coucher, n'est ce pas?"

I saw it all now. The good woman, sure I must be tired after a long and stormy journey, thought I was better in bed. Thither I retired, despondent at the prospect of daily meeting people conducting ordinary conversation at racing speed.

North Peat and his wife welcomed me with a kindness equal to that of his chief in London. He personally undertook to arrange for my settlement in apartments suitable to the shallowness of my purse. They were found on the top storey of an old-fashioned hotel in the neighbourhood of the Church of St. Sulpice. It was built round a courtyard, and was much resorted to by country clergy coming up for brief visits to the

capital. There was a restaurant on the ground floor into which I, with watering lips, frequently saw carried enticing dishes of deliciously puffed fried potatoes such as my soul loved. But the restaurant with its prices—at least two francs for a dinner—was not for me.

Wandering about the neighbourhood, I came upon a little *estaminet* close by the big drapery establishment Bon Marché, and there regularly took my meals during my pilgrimage in Paris. They were not satiating, nor were they criminally expensive. For what we English call breakfast I had a small basin of chocolate and a roll, which in English money totted up to  $2\frac{1}{2}d.$  Noon was the hour for the Frenchman's favourite meal, the *déjeuner à la fourchette*. Mine usually consisted of a cutlet or steak, bread and cheese, and a bock of German beer. This ran me into as much as  $9d.$  Dinner, taken about half-past six, cost from  $10d.$  to  $1s.$  Supper cost nothing, as I did not have any, though I confess, had I been urgently pressed, I would, rather than offend the sensibilities of a friend, have shared his hospitality.

On the average I lived—to be precise, existed—on  $2s.$  a day, an achievement impossible, I fancy, even in the Quartier Latin under the Republic.

At the time of which I write, the last full year of the Third Empire, there were abundance of well set-up restaurants where were served dinners at the *prix fixe*, one franc fifty, every dish perfectly cooked, savoured by the hand of genius. I never treated myself *seul* to one of these banquets. Occasionally, in expansive mood, I entertained friends whose acquaintance I made in the *estaminet*.

This hostelry, type of a congeries that flourished with the Third Empire, was kept by a couple whom



we knew as Père et Madame Camie. He was a short gentleman, a sign of a succession of good meals being hung out in a tendency to *embonpoint*. He wore a little black skull-cap and a closely cut fierce-looking moustache. As far as I observed, he never did a stroke of work. Save in the direst cold weather, he lounged about in his shirt-sleeves turned up to the elbow in token that, if any really hard labour came his way, here was the man to grapple with it. The mainstay of the establishment was Madame. She did most of the cooking, conducted in a kitchen at the back of the dining-room, and somehow always managed to be at the receipt of custom when a customer, having finished his meal, prepared to pass out.

That old campaigner Père Camie had his own way of increasing the revenues. If times were dull, he would sit at one of the tables and suggest a game at Imperial. The stakes were *consummation*, in the form of liqueur, *café noir*, or small packets of national tobacco known as "Caporal," much in favour with smokers of cigarettes. It was all very well when Père Camie was on the winning side. He not only got his *tasse* free, but payment for four was dropped into the till. It was different when luck deserted him, and he had to pay not only for his own refreshment, but for another's. His effort in these circumstances to preserve a jovial air so that Madame from her high chair at the counter should not guess how things were going, was ghastly in its effect.

A number of telegraph clerks to whose circle I was in due time honoured by admission, were regular customers, a special table being reserved for their use. It was with them Père Camie played with varying luck. One, bewrayed by his thick accent, came from



the sunny South. Though he drew his weekly pay from a Government office, he did not think much of ministers, whether of State or serving the holy Catholic Church. His political and religious creed was summed up in the oft-repeated assertion, *Tous les hommes sont champignons*. In moody moments, following on a run of bad luck with Père Camie, he expounded this text as meaning that, since we seated at the table casually grew up as mushrooms do, and would presently like them to be plucked up, nothing very much mattered.

One of the company was on account of extreme leanness known to his colleagues as Le Maigre. He justified Cæsar's preference, expressed to the disparagement of Cassius, for men that are fat, such as sleep o' nights. Le Maigre secretly brought sorrow and shame into the homely circle. The sole waitress was Adèle, a quiet-looking girl understood to be the niece of Madame. One morning Le Maigre, most punctual at meal times, did not turn up for *déjeuner*. It was also noted that Adèle, much in evidence at this time of day, was absent. Soon the sad story circulated. Le Maigre had carried off the girl, not to honourable marriage, and the *estaminet* saw their faces no more.

My particular friend was Augé, a man of culture far exceeding his fellows. I had a tutor, understood to be a Polish count in exile, who came twice a week to give me lessons in French. I learned much more from my companionship with Augé, whose Parisian accent contrasted pleasantly with that of the Gascon iconoclast. We sat together at meals, walked about in the evenings, he ever on the watch to correct my accent or explain an idiom.

I lived in Paris from May to December, friendless

and alone save for the circle gathered round Père Camie's bristling moustache and superhumanly wise-looking countenance. Once or twice I dined with the North Peats, occasions memorable by reason of opportunity of having enough to eat at a single meal. Walking about the streets, riding on 'buses, junketing up and down the river in steamboats, I was profoundly struck by the unrest among the people, their intense hatred of Emperor and Empress. One day I caught a glimpse of Rochefort, carried aloft on the shoulders of a mob of students thronging the boulevard Saint-Michel. I never saw a man looking so helplessly frightened as did the founder of the *Lanterne* then in its prime. Whether he feared the police or a fall, I do not know. His terror was abject.

In the summer the Emperor paid a visit to Beauvais. On the chance of getting material for an article acceptable in London, I journeyed thither with North Peat, who went down as representative of the *Morning Star*. The Prince Imperial accompanied the Emperor, who drove through living lanes of people stretching from the roadway to the open windows of the topmost chamber. They came to see, but they would not remain to cheer. The occasion was the presentation of prizes gained at the local Lycée. The head prize was never delivered, the winner, a lad of fourteen, declining to accept it from the hand of the hated Emperor.

One evening in the autumn of this year (1869) a riot broke out in the streets of Paris, and the cavalry recklessly rode into a crowd wherever it gathered. The last time I saw Napoleon III. in his own capital was on a beautiful evening towards the end of September. He was walking along the terrace flanking the river,

deep in conversation with a companion. It struck me that he presented an easy target for the countless pistols reported to be viciously fingered. He was spared for Sedan, and a year later, "unable to die at the head of my army," returned to his ancient exile in England.

## IX

### STILL STRUGGLING

I QUITTED Paris on the approach of Christmas Eve, 1869, having acquired the French language and some knowledge of the French people. My home visit was designed as a Christmas jaunt, I intending to return to my old quarters in the Quartier Latin. The Fates decreed otherwise. In January, 1870, Mr. George Smith, of Smith, Elder and Co., encouraged by the success attendant on his evening paper, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and cheered by the collaboration of Frederick Greenwood, a memorable master in journalism, resolved to adventure a morning edition. The evening *Pall Mall* had been on the multitudinous list of papers for which I wrote news paragraphs from Shrewsbury. The assistant-editor of the new morning edition was Mr. Fyfe, formerly an esteemed member of the *Times* staff. My friend and my first patron, Edward Russell, of Liverpool, learning that I was anxious to obtain a position on the staff of the new paper, wrote him a letter of strong recommendation. Walter Wood also had a personal interview with Fyfe, demonstrating to him that the success of the new paper was assured if they were so fortunate as to secure my services. Between the two the affair was clenched. I was straightway appointed to the sub-editorial staff at

what to me, fresh from frugal fare in Paris, was the magnificent salary of four guineas a week.

The aim George Smith and Greenwood set before them was to provide at the price of 2*d.* a paper which, less bulky than the *Times*, should even excel its journalistic and literary excellence. To that end the parliamentary summary, undertaken by Fyfe, was made a special feature, standing first on the leader page. Going down to the office one evening, I found my colleagues in a state of consternation. Fyfe had in the course of the morning been taken ill, and it was impossible for him to attend the Press Gallery. Greenwood sent for me and asked me to take his place for that night only. To-morrow, other arrangements would be made. To go down to the House of Commons and take an ordinary "turn" of reporting for the first time is, I suppose, a trying thing. To be bundled off at an hour's notice to fill the place of one of the most eminent parliamentary writers of the day, and to supply a leading article on a subject of the surroundings of which one was absolutely ignorant, might seem appalling. It came quite naturally to me. I did my best in the strange, somewhat bewildering, circumstances, and as long as the morning edition of the *Pall Mall* lasted I continued to write its summary. Fyfe came round again in a week; but he nevermore took up the summary, leaving it in my hands, with many words of kind encouragement.

Here was the sun shining with full radiance. Not only was my foot on the ladder. In less than two months I had gone up a dozen steps to the position of parliamentary summary writer under the most exigent of London editors. Alack! the ladder broke down, and, like Alnaschar, I woke from my pleasing dream



to find my possession shattered. One day, towards the end of May, a month others were proverbially disposed to regard as merry, I found awaiting me at the Press Gallery a note in the neat handwriting of George Smith, familiar to me in quite different circumstances in the closing years of his honoured life. It briefly stated that the morning edition of the *Pall Mall* would be discontinued from the Saturday following, and that my services would be no longer required.

This was a crusher; but I have always found a silver lining to every cloud. It happened at this juncture that the editor of the *Globe* had been consulted by the proprietor of the *Exeter Gazette* with the object of engaging an assistant editor. He communicated with me and suggested I should apply for the post. The salary was £200 a year. The position involved exile from London, but I had nothing else in prospect, and, having tasted blood in the pleasant form of a salary of four guineas a week, was not disposed to go back to Paris and penury.

A letter from the principal sub-editor of the evening edition of the *Pall Mall Gazette* replying to inquiries, resulted in my immediate engagement on the Exeter paper. I went down in June, 1870, and remained at the post till the first week in January, 1872—eighteen dull depressing months. The *Gazette* was the organ of the High Church Tory party in a cathedral city. At the date of my arrival on the scene they were distraught by the appointment of Dr. Temple to the bishopric. For the *Gazette* openly to rebuke, much less to revile a bishop of the Church, was against its ancient traditions. Yet it could not bring itself to pay homage to a contributor to *Essays and Reviews* whose name was anathema to the elect. The wriggling

of my esteemed proprietor in this dilemma was, as far as I remember, the only source of keen delight that came my way in Exeter. It was a dull place, depression arising out of lack of congenial company being added to by the relaxing temperature in which the city was swathed. The only thing that kept me from falling into a comatose state was that I still kept touch with London, writing Occasional Notes for the *Pall Mall* and leader notes for the *Globe*. Often, taking a constitutional walk before luncheon, I looked in at St. David's station, watched the express whirl off to London, and wondered when it would take me.

## X

### TALK WITH CHARLES DICKENS

AT the end of eighteen months Exeter and its connections became insupportable. I resigned my post, again burning my boats, as I did at Shrewsbury. I had no promise or prospect of other appointment. I returned to my modest lodgings in Portland Place, and since work would not come to me, I went in search of work. In the course of a month I built up a connection that relieved the immediate future from anxiety. Joynes, sub-editor of the *Pall Mall*, joyfully welcomed me back to Northumberland Street. There was no regular appointment on the staff available, but there was scarcely a day he did not put something in my way which brought in half a guinea, while a whole one.

This irregular engagement brought me face to face with the most dramatic episode flashing forth even in a London police-court. I sat all through the trial of a solicitor named Chaffers charged with blackmailing Sir Travers Twiss. For two days I was in the presence of the tortured wife in the witness-box, heard the relentless, slow-spoken scoundrel in the dock revelling in the relation, artfully introduced by way of cross-examination, of guilty acquaintance with him before her marriage. For two days Lady Twiss bore the terrible ordeal, in quiet unfaltering manner denying the odious allegations. On the third day the court sat, Chaffers

was in the dock licking his lips in anticipation of further parleying with his prey. Lady Twiss's name was called. There was no response. The close of the second day found her at the end of her tether. She had fled into oblivion, and with an evil smile Chaffers walked out of the dock a free man; but, as the magistrate frankly told him, "an object of scorn and contempt to his fellow-creatures."

In addition to reporting leading cases for the news columns of the *Pall Mall*, I continued to contribute Occasional Notes and improved upon my connection with the editorial columns of the *Globe*. I frequently dined out for the *Morning Post*, an engagement which once (two months before I went to Exeter) brought me in touch with Charles Dickens. He was presiding at some City dinner, and the table at which I was placed being almost out of hearing, I made my way nearer when he was about to speak, but could find no vacant seat. Observing my difficulty, probably not forgetful of days when he too went about with notebook and pencil, he with genial smile beckoned me to take a vacant chair almost immediately facing him at the principal table. There I saw and heard him for the last time.

In uncanny fashion it was the last time but one. Thereby hangs a curious but true tale. Thirty years ago I sought and found opportunity of testing the genuineness of table-turning, a practice at the time much in vogue. With three other persons, equally honest in search of the truth, we sat down and joined outstretched hands on a small table.

Presently it began to move, and there followed the customary catechism as to the identity of the spirit who honoured us with his (or her) company. This was



tried in succession by my three companions, who, reciting the alphabet in accordance with the formula, asked the visitor to "rap once" when a desired letter was reached.

The table gyrated with great vigour, but the alphabet was, in each case, exhausted without the desired spiritual acquiescence in a particular letter helping to spell a word. My turn coming round, I renewed the effort. When I came to the letter C the rim of the table prodded me in the chest with evidently joyous assent. Similar token was forthcoming when I got to the letter H; and so on until Charles Dickens was spelt out.

Then followed a quite friendly conversation, in the course of which the great novelist, four years dead, bade me call on his son Charles, at the time editor of *Household Words*, whom, he assured me, I should find in friendly mood.

My companions several times attempted to join in the conversation, but Charles Dickens would have nothing to do with them, severely ignoring their existence. Whenever I spoke the table throbbed with exuberance.

What puzzled me at the time, as seeming altogether incongruous, was the way my interlocutor mis-spelled his words. Written down, they were playfully ungrammatical. When, a year or two later, I came to read Forster's "Life of Dickens," I found that in the privacy of communication with his most intimate friend, "Boz" used occasionally to write in that way. For example, inviting Forster to dine with him at Jack Straw's Castle, Hampstead Heath, he wrote: "I knows a good 'ouse where we can have a red-hot chop for dinner and a glass of good wine."



This is perhaps the most striking point of the episode. Practical persons explain the vagaries of conversation through the medium of table-turning by averring that, unconsciously, the inquirer supplies the answer received. As I had at the time never heard of Dickens's humorous disregard for spelling and grammar when writing to Forster, I certainly could not have been responsible for that singular phase of the communications.

That is the story, told as simply as possible. I was so much struck with the incident that on the next day I found my way down to the office of *Household Words*, and sent in my card to the editor. My name being absolutely unknown to him, as it was to all outside a narrow circle, I expected my temerity would be properly rewarded by a message that the great man was engaged. On the contrary, I was promptly ushered into the presence of Charles Dickens, jun., who received me in friendliest fashion, and straightway commissioned me to write an article for *Household Words*.

It was accepted, and I received a prodigiously handsome cheque—the first earned in that field of labour.

At this time the *Echo*, pioneer of London halfpenny papers, was beginning to make its mark under the editorship of Mr. Arthur Arnold. I ventured a leader note, which was promptly accepted. Others following were received with equal hospitality. Soon I was promoted to the position of occasional leader writer and contributor of special articles. The pay was poor—one guinea for a leader, and the oddly precise sum of four shillings for a leader note. But every little helped. Already, before six months sped, my income from miscellaneous sources equalled that audaciously surrendered on quitting Exeter.

## XI

### I JOIN THE *DAILY NEWS*

IN the summer of this year (1872) I heard of a vacancy on the parliamentary staff of the *Daily News*, owing to the retirement of the Leader. I forthwith called on Robinson and asked for appointment to the berth that would be opened by readjustment of the staff. My reception was less chilly than on the first occasion. He made no promise, but on the following morning I received a telegram summoning me to the office. He gave me instructions to write a preliminary article about the Albert Memorial, just completed, and a second describing the ceremony of its unveiling by the Queen. Both duly appeared. Robinson did not offer any criticism about the workmanship, but he gave me a cheque for six guineas, which I regarded as munificent, and truly it was, compared with the pay from the *Echo* treasury. More still, he offered me an annual engagement on the paper, a prize richer than the one I had sought, which was sessional, with regular salary for six months in the year only.

The Albert Memorial is not loved by Londoners. There are people of artistic taste who speak slightly of its colours and design. For myself I never pass it without a kindly feeling. As Uncle Pumblechook used to say, alluding to Mrs. Gargery's relations with Pip, it was the "founder of my fortins."

Thus was my second visit to Robinson more successful than its predecessor. Years after I learnt that my first call at the office made a deeper impression on his mind than he indicated at the moment. In 1899 Richard Whiteing (of "No. 5 John Street") resigned his place on the editorial staff of the *Daily News*, with intent to devote himself wholly to literature. We gave him a farewell dinner at which Robinson presided.

In the course of his speech he said—

"My friend Lucy has altered very little in the years that have passed since he first came into my room, and surprised me by suggesting that he should reveal to an ignorant world the real conditions of modern French society and the changes needed in the European system generally. . . . I believe I suggested that we already had experienced correspondents in Paris, and that a stay of a few weeks, or even months, was not so startling an advantage as he appeared to believe. Lucy's cheery confidence was unshaken. He looked curiously at me, as though summing me up, and went away, I think, with the understanding that the wonderful chance he had given us would not be altogether unfruitful. . . . Lucy has written many volumes in the *Daily News* since those days, and is the best known Parliamentarian living. My only complaint is that we do not get enough of him. He is so good that I want him *all*. I don't quite like the literary 'sprinkling' to which successful men nowadays sometimes lend themselves. But no doubt the temptation—a shining one—is irresistible."

My engagement with the *Daily News* dated from October 1st, 1872. In the meanwhile I remained a

free lance. Robinson was liberal in his commissions for special articles. A notable one led to my accompanying the English Roman Catholics who made a pilgrimage to Paray le Monial. On the railway journey through France I made the acquaintance of Monsignor Capel, the "Catesby" of Disraeli's "Lothair." This led to a friendship maintained till the handsome Monsignor, idol of London society, a persuasive recruiting sergeant for the Army of the Church of Rome, suddenly left the country and was next heard of located in California. A vivid recollection of the pilgrimage is the spectacle of the 15th Duke of Norfolk in the procession through the streets of Paray le Monial to the sacred cave, staggering under the weight of a voluminous banner.

In connection with this expedition, I was agreeably surprised to receive a letter from Mr. Smalley, then London correspondent of the *New York Tribune*, asking me to write some account of the affair for his paper. It was rather a rush, with little time for quiet writing. The railway journey was long, and I utilised it homeward bound by writing two special letters for the *Tribune*. This was the commencement of a pleasant connection with that journal, lasting through many years. When Smalley went on his annual holiday, which extended over a month or six weeks, I, at his request, lightly added the weight of his work to the burden of my own, at the time excessive. It meant the writing of two letters a week, with a cable message a column in length despatched on Saturday.

During the Home Rule campaign of 1886 my connection with the *Tribune* became closer. Smalley, formerly an ardent admirer of Gladstone and all his works, like tens of thousands of others, turned upon



him when he raised the Home Rule flag and would have rent him. It happened at this time that the name of Mr. Whitelaw Reid, proprietor of the paper, was mentioned in connection with the Vice-Presidency of the United States. With the Irish vote a potent factor, it would never do to have the London Letter, whether by cable or post, tri-weekly denouncing Home Rule. Smalley accordingly temporarily retired, and for something like three months I filled his place.

Beyond this honourable and lucrative professional connection, I trace back to the Paray le Monial pilgrimage the incidental consequence of enjoying the personal friendship of Mr. Whitelaw Reid, to-day Ambassador from the United States at the Court of St. James's. When I saw him first he was acting editor and actual proprietor of the great newspaper founded by Horace Greely. My wife and I had reached New York, first stage on a journey round the world. I called at the office, meeting with a hearty reception, closely followed by an invitation to spend some days with Mrs. Reid and himself at Far Rockaway, the musically named seaside place where his country house was then situated. Circumstances prevented our accepting the invitation. But I was, with Lord Rosebery and Sir William Hardman, editor of the *Morning Post*, a guest at a dinner given by Mr. Reid at the Union Club to the English travellers. I happened to sit next to Mr. Evarts, and had a delightful time. He whispered to me the information that, with the exception of himself, every American at the table either had been a candidate for the Presidency, or contemplated candidature. One of them (Grover Cleveland) not only became a candidate but was, within a year of the feast, elected President.



Early in 1900 I proposed to renew my connection with the *Tribune* by writing an occasional letter. Mr. Reid replied—

“451, MADISON AVENUE,  
Feb. 21st, 1900.

“DEAR MR. LUCY:—It would be a pleasure to accept unreservedly the proposal in your note of Jan. 30th. As you know we have always valued your work when we have had the good fortune to have it; and I fully appreciate your sources of information, as well as the sunny tempered and broad minded way in which you utilise them. But, at present, we are rather more than usually under the constant struggle to get in even the best of the news, which we have already provided and paid for. Your war in Africa and ours in the Philippines, our own Presidential campaign, which is opening, and the sessions of our Congress and the State Legislatures, load the ship to the water's edge.

“While our Staff London correspondent is so engrossed with the war news, I should really be glad, if I could see a chance, to crowd in an occasional letter from you on some topic of special interest at the moment. I have already given orders to do this with reference to your letter about Redmond and Irish renaissance; and we should try to do the same thing perhaps once a month, or a little oftener, if you should see the occasion during the time while Ford is so pressed. I am afraid this is an inhospitable response to your valued offer; but you know the newspaper business so well that you will see the situation as clearly as I do. I give you hearty congratulations on the changed aspect of the war. It is an immense relief

to us as well as to you. With cordial regards to Mrs. Lucy, in which Mrs. Reid desires to join,

“I am, Yours sincerely,

“J. WHITELAW REID.”

When I joined the *Daily News*, the paper, after long and costly struggles, was floating on the tide of prosperity. Under Robinson's bold, well-guided direction and his happy discovery of Archibald Forbes and other War Correspondents, it had beaten all competitors as the Chronicler of the Franco-German War. Not inclined to rest on his oars, Robinson turned his special correspondents on home tracks. Forbes made a fresh hit by his letters from Ireland in the disturbed period that added the word “boycott” to the English language. More permanent and important was the assistance the *Daily News* by his pen gave to the emancipation of the Agricultural Labourer from the thralldom of a custom that made common a wage of eleven shillings a week.

Out of the Parliamentary Session I took my turn at this kind of work. One mission was in connection with the wreck of the *Northfleet*, run down off Dungeness in the dead of a January night with a loss of 300 lives. This happened on January 22, 1873. Inquiry opened at Dover where some of the survivors were landed. In course of time it was removed to Lydd, an old-world town connected with the sea by a mile of shingle traversed with the assistance of footgear locally known as “back-stays,” being strips of wood attached to the boot. Driving from Dover to Lydd we passed through Hythe, one of the Cinque Ports. I was charmed with the crooked narrow way of its High Street, with its old-fashioned roofs and house fronts dating back beyond Stuart times.

Some years later I revisited Hythe, a holiday often repeated. In 1883, before starting on a journey round the world, we bought a piece of land commanding a far-reaching view over the great highway of the Channel. We settled upon building plans, and when we came back, lo! there stood, rock built, red-tiled Whitethorn, a happy home through succeeding years, with its garden where roses grow beyond compare, and through late spring nights the nightingale sings. From 1874 to 1900 I did an amount of work that, looking back, seems incredible. I attribute my unbroken health and vigour largely to the habit of week-ending through the Session in our cottage by the sea.

It was to Whitethorn, by the way, that Lord Charles Beresford despatched a message famous in the Home Fleet. From 1893-96 he was in command of the Steam Reserve at Chatham Dockyard. One Friday afternoon I received from him at the House of Commons a telegram saying he was going to take the *Magnificent* just completed, for a trial trip, and inviting John Penn (Member for Dulwich, whose firm had engined the battleship) and me to run down and join her. We arrived at his quarters in time for dinner, and getting up at five o'clock the following morning steamed down the Medway in the Admiral's launch, boarding the *Magnificent* in the Channel.

She was not yet commissioned; had not her regular crew on board, and as far as deck and cabin arrangements were concerned was in rather rough condition. Arrangements were made beforehand that on the return journey I was to be dropped at Dover within convenient distance of Hythe. The trial being prolonged, it was impossible to carry out the programme. Lord Charles, always thoughtful of others, feared that

my wife would be anxious at my non-arrival. Passing Hythe on the homeward tack, assured of safety by constant soundings, he brought the ironclad closer to land in Hythe Bay than battleships had floated since the Danes made their historic descent on the coast. The coastguardsmen on duty hurrying to the beach at the unusual spectacle, were signalled to receive a message by semaphore. It ran thus—

“To Mrs. Lucy, Whitethorn, Hythe.

“From Lord Charles Beresford, Magnificent.

“Mr. Lucy will be home to luncheon to-morrow at 1.30.”

Half an hour later the following message was delivered. “To Mrs. Lucy, Whitethorn, Hythe. From Lord Charles Beresford. Magnificent Mr. Lucy will be home to luncheon to-morrow at 1.30.”

Semaphore signalling does not take into account semicolons or full stops. To this day Lord Charles, writing to me, invariably addresses “Magnificent Mr. Lucy.”

It was in February, 1873, that I entered upon what proved a long career as manager of the *Daily News* Parliamentary corps and writer of its Parliamentary summary. It was a curious, in some respects a delicate, position, seeing that, compared with some of the staff, I was a mere chicken in point of age. Three had been on the paper since it started under the editorship of Charles Dickens. They had been contemporaries of the novelist's father when at last “something” did “turn up” in the way of a salaried appointment on the Gallery staff of the *Morning Chronicle*. Had fortune favoured me in that direction,



any one of these three Nestors might have been my grandfather.

In spite of this disparity, alike of age and of experience, we got along admirably, they easing my path with kindly counsel and the friendliest consideration. It was different with some of the old hands on other corps, who bitterly resented the intrusion of a comparative youngster reaching at a bound a leading position in the Gallery. I was innocent of designed offence, too busy and too much interested in my work to take notice of their little ways.

The arrangements provided for members of the Press were archaically scanty. Cramped for room for writing out their reports, the commissariat department was in the hands of the outer doorkeeper. His resources did not extend beyond a round of beef and a knuckle of ham, delicacies brought down, it was whispered, in his big red pocket-handkerchief.

Even this accommodation was regarded askance by the constituted authorities of the House. They were still accustomed to regard the Press as an intruder, subjected under the beneficent regulation of Stuart days to instant expulsion if any member pleased to take note of the presence of its representatives. In 1867 a Committee sat to consider the general arrangements of the House. The reporters, greatly daring, seized this opportunity of laying before it a statement of their grievances, and asked for fuller convenience in carrying on their work. The Sergeant-at-Arms (Lord Charles Russell) was, very properly, astonished at their unreasonableness. He plaintively deplored the times when, as he put it, reporters seemed to require only the necessaries of life, not presuming to lift their eyes to its luxuries.



"They used, I am told," Lord Charles added, "just to have a glass of water and biscuits, or anything of that sort. Now they have their tea at the back of the Gallery."

Oliver Twist asking for more barely reached the height of these reporters of forty years ago. Like Mr. Bumble, the Sergeant-at-Arms literally gasped in dismayed astonishment.

All that is changed. Thanks to the courtesy and reasonableness of successive First Commissioners of Works, of whom Mr. David Plunket, now Lord Rathmore, was the first to labour in the field, the arrangements in the Press Gallery of to-day leave nothing to be desired.

On the eve of New Year's Day, 1873, Parliament still being in recess, I went down to South Wales to write about a strike in which 60,000 colliers were concerned. I remained there upwards of a fortnight, daily telegraphing a long letter to the *Daily News*. Public attention became concentrated on the episode. Kindly hearts were touched by the narrative of the sufferings of women and children, foodless and fireless whilst the breadwinners waged their battle with the employers. Money in relief of the suffering thousands began to flow in to the *Daily News* office. Within three weeks £10,000, in addition to many gifts in kind, were placed at the disposal of the manager of the paper. With a portion of the money allotted to him, the rector of Merthyr was enabled to feed daily for seventeen weeks 5000 children.

The principal London and provincial papers followed the lead of the *Daily News* in sending special correspondents to South Wales. Among them came Christie Murray, who was on the staff of the *Birmingham*

*Morning News*, a recently established, not long-lived, paper edited by George Dawson. The London men were inclined to snub Murray, whose manner was somewhat high and mighty. He did not mean anything. Shyness was doubtless at the bottom of the business. But it led to his being chaffed and, to a considerable extent, ostracised by the company of journalists messing at the hotel. I was sorry for the youth, made friends with him, and gradually brought the others round to a more genial attitude.

The *Morning News* being discontinued, Murray came to London in search of fortune. I tried to get him an engagement on the *Daily News*, but Robinson did not view the proposal with favour, though he gave him an occasional engagement which put a few guineas in his pocket. As soon as I had made arrangements for starting a weekly paper of my own, I wrote to Murray informing him of the proposal and cheering him with promise of regular work as a contributor. This was abundantly fulfilled. From the first number he was a regular contributor to *Mayfair*, doing excellent work both in verse and prose. As far as outward sign testified, he was never a penny the richer. Cheques were sent out weekly in payment of contributions to the current number. Murray was always ahead of his remittance, sometimes to the extent of two or three weeks.

When the Russo-Turkish war broke out in 1877 he obtained a commission from the *Times* and saw some service in the field. For him the campaign ended ingloriously, he being held captive for payment of debts incurred. He wrote home to his friends, begging for ransom. I subscribed £10 to the necessary sum, which brought about the end of my acquaintance with

Murray. Coming home on obtaining his release, he one day sauntered into my room at the *Mayfair* office, grandly attired in a fur coat, to the purchase of which my poor £10 would have gone but a small way. He talked loftily of his connection with the *Times* and of his immediate prospects in Printing House Square, which alas! ended in smoke. I took the opportunity of speaking hopefully of the prospects of the hard-working, stay-at-home journalists who had put together the contents of their slim purses for Prince Florizel's deliverance. Now, I affected to believe, they would all be repaid.

He was very angry at the turn given to the conversation. I do not know whether he repaid any other. I not only did not get a penny back, but straightway became the object of my old friend's personal animosity.

Murray was a strange compound of genius, sentimentality, and selfishness. In the early days of our acquaintance he, with tears coursing down his cheeks, read to me a charming verse he had written to his wife on her birthday. The next time I saw the poor lady's name mentioned was, some years later, in the police-court news, wherein she appeared as an applicant for an order compelling her husband to pay a certain alimony settled by the magistrate who had adjudicated upon a case of desertion.

Another acquaintance ripening into friendship made on the South Wales mission was that of George Henty, beloved of boys as the author of many stirring stories. He appeared on the scene as representative of the *Standard*. He was at once the warmest-hearted, shortest-tempered man in the world. After our day's work was done some of us used to have a hand at

whist, a game in which Henty was proficient. One night, we invited to dinner at our hotel the telegraph clerk sent down from London to cope with our voluminous messages. The *pièce de résistance* of the meal was a loin of pork. We asked the telegraph man what wine he would drink. "Port," he promptly answered, and he washed down portions of pig with libations of port, a conjunction of two P's probably theretofore unparalleled.

After dinner we had our turn at whist, and the hapless telegraph man became Henty's partner. It was pretty to watch Henty's face as the first hand was played. Remembering his position as joint host, he put restraint upon himself that threatened an explosion, with his dinner and his brains distributed about the room. When the telegraph clerk, seeing his opportunity, and determined to have at least one trick to his credit, trumped Henty's king of hearts on the second round, the ace having earlier captured the queen, Henty jumped to his feet and threw his cards on the table exclaiming "My God!"

That was all he said. But the expression of blank amazement and hopeless despair conveyed by the exclamation terrified the telegraph clerk, who said he had better go and see whether our messages had safely reached London.

Before he found his true vocation in writing boys' books, Henty tried various methods of supplementing his salary on the *Standard*. One was the recovery of tin from broken or disused utensils. For some months his study was filled with a bad smell and scraps of broken tin. The former was engendered by efforts to melt off the tin from the baser metal with the assistance of a chemical compound invented by the operator.



The next thing that attracted Henty's attention and filled him with hope of fortune was the building of a reversible boat, bound to right itself automatically. He took rooms up the river and with some assistance from a village mechanic built his boat. To a certain extent it proved an unqualified success. At the slightest well-directed touch, sometimes without, it would turn over, keel uppermost, with Henty in the river. Righting itself was, as the French say, another pair of sleeves. Through some anxious weeks he was frequently ignominiously rescued by a passing boat, and walked home oozing water from pockets and boots. In the end his landlady gave him notice on the ground that she could not "be always mopping up after him." I fancy he gladly seized this opportunity of retiring from the boat-building business.

To the end he retained his fondness for river and sea, keeping a yawl which, with the assistance of a crew of one boy, he sailed himself. The last time I met him was at the dinner-table of another old friend. In the long interval since we first met, he had grown very stout. Bent upon friendly conversation, he had a somewhat embarrassing habit of prodding you, so to speak, with his corporation. He wanted me to go and spend a week-end with him on his yawl.

"Can always put a fellow up," he said. "Can't do more than one; but I'll make you comfortable, and we can have a chat about old times."

"How big is she?" I asked.

"Twenty tons," he answered.

That settled the matter. I was very fond of Henty, but the idea of being shut up from Saturday to Monday with him and his Great Possession, of being pursued along the deck of a twenty-tonner when he desired



literally to impress a remark upon my attention, was too much. I remembered I was engaged for the week-end.

One of the kindest-hearted men in the world, who would not hurt a fly, much less wound a reporter, Robinson possessed in high degree the gift of writing scorching letters to a delinquent. They were always short, but piercingly pointed, bringing terror to the household of the man to whom they were addressed. It was only his fun, a grotesque mask that hid a kindly countenance. After my escapade at Rochester, related in a subsequent chapter, I do not remember suffering in this way, save once, somewhere I think in the nineties, when he wrote me a savagely worded, as I thought, unjust commentary on my work in the Gallery. I responded by resigning my post. Forthwith came this undated letter in which the real Robinson appears—

“4, ADDISON CRESCENT, KENSINGTON, W.,

“ *Wednesday night.*”

“MY DEAR LUCY,—I am a fallible man and your letter makes me feel this very thoroughly. I put such a high estimate on your work that I am quite likely to expect too much and be exacting. We cannot possibly spare you. We are bound in a hundred ways to go on; so forget my letter and forgive a hasty effusion. The names you mention are those of men who are better critics than I am. It was only my wish to make the articles, as I thought, quite perfect. Yours very truly,

“J. R. ROBINSON.”

The following letter refers to an incident in my life in the Press Gallery:—

"42, ASHLEY GARDENS, VICTORIA STREET,

"January 23, 1902.

"MY DEAR SIR,—On the threshold of my thirtieth session in the Press Gallery of the House of Commons I should esteem it a privilege, if I might be permitted in some small way to make permanent record of my esteem for the Brotherhood among whom I have so long worked. We have from time to time brought under our notice the case of comrades in temporary need, owing to no fault of their own, or of the widows and children of Gallery men to whom a few pounds would be of service.

"It has occurred to me that the committee might be disposed to add to their other invaluable services to the Gallery the undertaking of a trust to dispose of a small assured annual fund for distribution in these directions. I would suggest that a sub-Committee of three be annually appointed to discharge the duty, an essential condition of its working being absolute secrecy as to the apportionment of the little gifts. If the proposal meets the approval of the Committee, I shall be glad to hand you a cheque for £1000, the interest to be available (as long as a Press Gallery exists) for the purpose indicated.

"Yours faithfully,

"HENRY W. LUCY.

*"To the Chairman of the Committee of the Press Gallery."*

The offer was warmly accepted, and the working of the scheme has been attended by unqualified success. It did away with a kindly, not always judicious, custom of sending the hat round whenever a Gallery man died

and left his family in straitened circumstances. Now all cases come privily before a sub-Committee, are considered in strict privacy, and are dealt with on their merits.

An especially pleasing development of the scheme is that every Session voluntary contributions to the fund are made by Members. Thus it grows year by year, with the promise that in time the tribute of the Gallery will exceed the donation of the founder of the Trust.

It is a pleasure to me that the Committee of the Society should have been able to do so much for the cause of the poor. It is a pleasure to me that the Committee should have been able to do so much for the cause of the poor. It is a pleasure to me that the Committee should have been able to do so much for the cause of the poor.

## XII

### LONDON CORRESPONDENT

I HAVE forgotten to mention that among other work carried on through these days of drudgery, I wrote a weekly London Letter, which appeared simultaneously in seven or eight of the principal county papers. When my connection with *Mayfair* ceased, the paper drifting into the possession of a gentleman who desired to enter Parliament, I was approached by one of my clients, who also owned a morning newspaper, with the suggestion that I should write and despatch by telegraph a Daily Letter exceeding a column in length. Here, again, was a task sufficient to occupy, as in several familiar cases it engrosses, the full attention of a journalist. For me it was to be the supplement of my regular work on the *Daily News*. However, it was a highly paid post, one of considerable influence in view of the wide and populous circle of readers addressed. I found no difficulty in forming a syndicate of eight of the leading provincial daily papers, and early had the satisfaction of knowing that the Letter had become a popular feature in the several papers in which it appeared.

Amongst my constant readers during the recess was Mr. Gladstone. He once told me the first thing in the way of newspapers he read was the London

Letter in the *Liverpool Daily Post*. Here is a post-card from him dated Hawarden Castle, October 13, 1890—

“DEAR MR. LUCY,—I quite understood your first paragraph in the London Letter, but feared you had interpreted favourably the demand made upon us. I fear the true interpretation is according to your citation in the London Letter which appears to-day, viz. that I myself and the whole Party are to engage to take no step, give no vote on the matter referred to until the next Parliament but one. A large order. Hoping we may meet. I remain, faithfully yours.”

The matter referred to was the Disestablishment of the Church in Scotland, a question at the time dividing the Liberal Party north of the Tweed. Many were prepared to vote for Home Rule as a plank in Mr. Gladstone's platform, which it was evident from the trend of political affairs must soon be set up. But they demurred to have the Disestablishment question raised at the forthcoming General Election.

I kept the Daily Letter running till acceptance of the editorship of the *Daily News* made its continuance impossible. It was resumed in January, 1888, in circumstances detailed in the following editorial note in the *South Wales Daily News*:—

“It is with pleasure that we have to announce that we have been able to again secure the services of Mr. Henry W. Lucy, who for so many years (up to April, 1886) contributed our London Letter, and was generally admitted to have carried London correspondence to the highest state of perfection at that time attained. Mr. Lucy resigned the work of London correspondence on



becoming editor-in-chief of the London *Daily News*, and in this important position increased still further his extensive knowledge of all the political leaders of the day, and of the movements contemplated by them. Mr. Lucy, however, always hankered after his old position in the House of Commons, and a short time since resigned the editorship in order to again take up his former work. Our readers may therefore anticipate that his London correspondence will be still further enriched by the increased sources of information now in his possession, and by the remarkably extensive and intimate acquaintance he has acquired amongst the leaders of every political and social movement."

Without exception the papers I had formerly served came back to the fold. Mr. Leader, one of the proprietors of the *Sheffield Independent*, undertook the position of hon. secretary and treasurer of the syndicate. To him four years later was addressed the following letter:—

" LONDON,  
" October 14, 1892.

"DEAR MR. LEADER,—I wish to give you timely notice of my intention to ask leave at the close of the recess to withdraw from my service to your syndicate. Supposing, as is probable, Parliament meets on an early day in February, January 31 would seem to be a suitable date for the termination of my engagement. In any case you would probably think it convenient to commence the new service with the new Session. I take this step with much regret, my personal relations with the syndicate, and in a special degree with yourself, having been most agreeable and encouraging. But

the fact is the duties of a London Correspondent, if properly fulfilled, are so engrossing and exacting as practically to engage every moment of his time. I cannot afford, if I were disposed, to do any work with which my name is prominently associated otherwise than at my best. I feel I have sustained the effort long enough, and shall henceforward concentrate this department of my work on my weekly Letter.

“Whatever may be the merits or demerits of the correspondence taking the twelve months through, I have at least the satisfaction of knowing that, whilst I have kept it going for upwards of ten years, during which you have printed innumerable paragraphs on personal and political questions of the day, I do not recall any case in which you have been obliged to retract a statement—certainly none in which the London Letter has involved you in legal proceedings. With sincere regard,

“I am, yours faithfully,

“HENRY W. LUCY.”

At this period it was quite time to reef the sails represented by my daily work. When I look back at the accomplished tasks of a single day, I marvel how it was done—done, too, with apparent ease and un-failing regularity. My secretary arrived at 10.30 in the morning. My luncheon time—writing for *Punch*, the *Observer*, the *Weekly Graphic*, with an occasional magazine article thrown in, always a considerable private correspondence to conduct—a pretty fair day’s work was completed. Actually it was a mere preliminary, a sort of canter before the race began. After luncheon I went straight off to the House. On most nights, with interval for dinner, I was in my box in

the Gallery in close touch with what was going on till the House was up. At this stage my work was simply doubled. I was a dual personage: summary writer for the *Daily News*, London Correspondent for eight important daily papers, each wanting the very best. In addition, no slight addition, I spent an hour, sometimes two, in the Lobby in conversation with multitudinous friends on both sides of the House. As a result I wrote for the *Daily News*, in addition to "Pictures in Parliament," a separate London Letter, rarely less than half a column in length.

After all it was easy enough. I made it a point of honour never to touch my country work till I had done my best for the *Daily News*. That copy despatched with full record up to the current moment, I approached my London Letter from a fresh point of view, wrote in a different style and, though necessarily dealing with the same incidents, produced an article which no one not privy to the fact would know was the work of one and the same person. Taking up the wondrous tale at a later period of the sitting the process was repeated, the *Daily News* always being first served.

One other consequence of my connection with the country newspapers was my solitary appearance in the field of romance. The late Mr. Tillotson, proprietor of a Bolton weekly paper that from the first took my London Letter, was the manager of a syndicate providing fiction for the weekly Press. It was, perhaps, a dubious compliment that he should have convinced himself that the writer of his London Letter had in him the making of a master of fiction. With a light heart and an unrelieved load of work, I accepted a commission to write a novel. The result was "Gideon

Fleyce," which, after running through the weekly papers, was published by Chatto & Windus in three-volume form. It did not incommode the libraries or the booksellers with a rush of applications. But it was favourably received by the Press, and, the first edition worked off, the publishers were encouraged to print a cheaper one. I am proud to remember that one of its warmest admirers was the late George Bentley, who frequently urged me to write a novel for him. I really had not time. "Gideon Fleyce" was written in spare hours and half hours snatched from the eternal round of daily work hinted at, and that work had in the meantime considerably grown.

Like all my work, whether for the book-world or for newspapers, the text of the novel was dictated to a shorthand writer. My time being fully engaged through the Session with Parliamentary affairs, I formed the custom, after I had done a pretty stiff morning's work, of going with my secretary into the garden if it were fine, into another room if it were not, and, thus refreshed by change of scene, writing a chapter of "Gideon Fleyce."

I remember how my secretary, a lanky Scotchman, lacking his countrymen's love of hard work, used to groan when I started upon a new episode of the thrilling story. At first this encouraged me, as I thought I recognised in it a burst of emotion uncontrollable under the spell of the writing. Too soon I learnt it was a moan of disgust at the irrepressible energy that would carry me on for another quarter of an hour, which for him meant at least an hour's writing out from manuscript. This was rather discouraging, and I put down to its influence any exceptionally weak passages in the novel.



Another appreciative reader was the eminent critic of the *Athenæum*, himself a successful novelist.

"THE PINES, 11, PUTNEY HILL, S.W.,  
"July 15, 1904.

"DEAR LUCY,—I suppose I need not say that both Swinburne and I were deeply gratified by your generous words in *Punch*, and Swinburne wishes to join me in thanking you for them. Should you, amid your thousand and one sources of interest and business, find time to come and see us again, it would give us the greatest pleasure. Could you not some time bring Mrs. Lucy to tea? That would not take up much time.

"I was successful in getting your two books. I am more persuaded than ever that, if it so pleased you, you might take a high position as a novelist. With kindest regards,

"Believe me to be,

"Most sincerely yours,

"THEODORE WATTS-DUNTON."

The books referred to are "Gideon Fleyce" and a series of short stories taking their title from the opening one, "The Miller's Niece."



### XIII

#### THE WORLD AND MAYFAIR

IN the summer of July, 1874, Edmund Yates started *The World*. In a characteristic preface written by himself he announced: "*The World* will be an amusing chronicle of current history divested of the nonsense which has hitherto stuck like treacle to public business, so that apparently it could not be touched with clean hands. Politics, and even Parliamentary proceedings deserving of attention, will sometimes be discussed from any point of view from which there is a clearer prospect or less of fog than is usual."

Telling in his *Recollections and Experiences* the story of the birth of the journal, Yates writes: "When we were eight months old, a powerful reinforcement came to me in the person of Mr. Henry W. Lucy, whose admirable Parliamentary sketches, 'Under the Clock,' instantly commanded attention."

It was a note from Yates asking me to call at his private residence, then in Cavendish Square, which led to my being recruited on the new journal already beginning to make a stir. I do not think I was at the time personally known to him. If so, the acquaintance was slight. He told me later that his attention had been drawn to my work by the publication in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of a series of articles entitled "Men and Manner in Parliament," purporting to be

written by the Member for the Chiltern Hundreds. They were reprinted in book form by Tinsley, who I hope made something out of the business. The Press received the book with encouraging appreciation. But I suppose, as I never got a penny for it, the public did not rush to buy it.

Yates offered me what I regarded as a dazzling wage of four guineas for a sort of weekly chronicle of Parliamentary proceedings. From the first it had assigned to it the place of honour in the lively journal, and at the commencement of the next Session (1876) he, as he put it in a pleasant letter, desiring to share with his colleagues the prosperity of *The World*, nearly doubled my salary, making it, for its length, probably the most highly priced contribution to the weekly Press.

Every effort was made on Yates's part and my own to preserve the anonymity of the contribution. It was publicly disclosed in connection with an action for libel brought against the paper by an Orange M.P., one Charles Lewis. Shortly after the Parliament of 1874 was summoned he began to push himself to the front in a manner from which the fine taste and sensibility of the House of Commons instinctively revolts. I freely descanted upon his mannerism, incidentally noting his attire, which bewrayed the man. He ever presented himself in black frock coat and trousers, in summer or winter, relieved by a white waistcoat. There was no reason why he should not, even in wintry weather, wear a white waistcoat. Somehow or other, to an impressionable mind, it completed the distaste created by the stumpy figure, the hard face adorned with mutton-chop whiskers, and the raucous voice.

In his organised effort to keep himself to the front,

Lewis tried a fall with Robert Lowe and came heavily to the ground. On another occasion he raised a case of breach of privilege, and moved that the printers of two of the London morning papers should be brought to the Bar of the House charged with the crime of having reported the proceedings of the Select Committee on Foreign Loans. It was, of course, an absurdity, proceedings in Select Committees being reported as regularly as debates in Parliament. But privilege is in some respects analogous to the monster created by Frankenstein. Being formally invoked, it for a while dominated the House, wasted an hour of public time, resulting in the printers, who were bodily brought to the Bar, being begged to go away and say nothing more about it.

These and other banalities on the part of the Member for Londonderry were commented upon in "Clock" articles, much to the amusement of the House. Lewis at length brought an action for libel against *The World*. It was tried before Lord Chief Justice Cockburn, an ominous circumstance, since it was no secret that he hated Edmund Yates and all his works. He was obliged to admit that there was no case to go before a jury, and the action came to swift conclusion.

My connection with *The World* lasted only two Sessions. It was lucrative and honourable. With the audacity of comparative youth I thought I could do better on my own account. In December, 1877, appeared the first number of *Mayfair*, a sixpenny weekly, of which I was editor, with half share in the proprietorship. The scheme of the new venture was set forth in the following passage from the prospectus:—

"*Mayfair* starts free from obligations either to

persons or to party. Those concerned are not insensible to the attraction of the possibility of making a fortune out of the pecuniary venture, and have elaborated commercial machinery which may effect that desirable end. But no one primarily looks to live by the journal, the founders being chiefly solicitous to acquire a medium through which they may speak plainly and honestly on public questions with the bearings of which they chance to be specially familiar. That this may be done without outraging good taste—that facts may be stated plainly, and arguments advanced boldly, without invading the privacy of life, or justifying the charge of vulgarity—is a task to the accomplishment of which the writers of *Mayfair* devote themselves with some confidence.”

What was at the time a novelty in this class of weekly papers was the illustration of the text by freely drawn sketches, as often as possible done from life.

The idea was to have a paper equal to *The World* in literary style, but free from the spice of devilry which occasionally flashed across its pages and shocked good people. It turned out that it was just this particular flavouring that made *The World* palatable. *Mayfair* was served by a staff some of whom have risen to high distinction. Amongst them is a learned judge whose Court is to-day constantly illuminated with those scintillations of humour that did not save *Mayfair* from gradual decay and an early grave. Another constant contributor, for a long while acting as assistant editor, was Dr. Hueffer, who from the modest level of *Mayfair* stepped into the chair of theatrical critic of the *Times*. Henry J. Byron later filled that position on *Mayfair*, John Corlett, the *Pink*



'Un not yet blushing to find itself famous, writing weekly on the Turf. Mr. Francillon, novelist and critic, was one of the earliest and most regular contributors. Mr. George Cave, K.C., Recorder of Guildford, Member for the Kingston Division of Surrey, told me the other day that among his chiefest treasures is a copy of an article he contributed to *Mayfair*. He has since established a high reputation in his profession as editor of "Sweet's Conveyancing" and "Gale on Easements." Reviewing his literary achievements he thinks tenderly of the article in *Mayfair* and the two guineas it brought him.

I have mentioned Christie Murray, not yet developed as a novelist. Edmund Gosse, now throned in the Library of the House of Lords, was another who kept up the style and authority of *Mayfair*. But it never paid. On the contrary, the joint proprietors lost heavily. My partner was Joseph Cowen, Member for Newcastle, a man of generous mind and vast wealth, to whom the loss of a few thousands was, as the buyer said, "Naught." I hadn't thousands to lose. What I had went to meet expenses. It is at least to the credit of the derelict that, with the exception of Cowen and myself, no one lost a penny by the enterprise. On weekly pay-days every claim was met.

Amongst some cherished friendships born of my editorial connection with the paper was that of Henry J. Byron. For a year or so we were close neighbours in Brixton Road, and I frequently looked in for a chat about his forthcoming article. He was curiously restless about his habitation, having barely settled down in one abode before he was off to another. Wherever he went stables were necessary for the accommodation of a pair of carriage horses of which he was justly proud.

Calling one morning, I found him chuckling over



the bewilderment of his coachman. Making his morning report, he announced symptoms of illness on the part of the mare.

"I think I'd better give her a ball," he said.

"All right," replied Byron, "only don't ask too many people."

I don't know whether in the course of the day or later the coachman saw the sequence of this remark. To Byron's great delight it evidently bewildered him as he left the room.

Byron was a devoted admirer of Charles Lamb, from whose writings he frequently quoted in conversation. As a mark of special friendship he gave me a copy of Elia's complete works in prose and verse. On the fly-leaf is written the curt, dateless inscription: "H. W. Lucy, from H. J. Byron."

Most modest among men, he thought very little of his own work. I have a vivid recollection of seeing him almost literally dragged on to the stage by James and Thorne, in response to the enthusiastic call of a thronged house present at the one-thousandth night of *Our Boys*.

"What a fuss about nothing!" he said, when the ordeal was over.

My withdrawal from the staff of *The World* did not rupture friendly relations with the editor and proprietor. There was a little friction at first, but it was smoothed away by a jest. I invented the title of the Parliamentary article, "Under the Clock by One of the Hands," with occasional interpolation by "The Other One." At the end of the second year it was closely bound up with my identity. It seemed natural and proper that if Yates continued to have a Parliamentary article it should start with a fresh name. He, however, opened

the new Session with what purported to be a continuance of the old series. I wrote complaining that some one was "masquerading in my clothes."

Swift came the reply. "My dear Lucy, there is no one on our staff whom your clothes would fit."

Across the broad acres of streets that separated our residences I fancied I could hear Yates's hearty guffaw as he penned and posted this quip. Next to himself, I do not think any one enjoyed it more than its innocent object.

The new series did not take on with readers of *The World* and was presently dropped, my place of honour on the front page of the paper being filled by a political article from the brilliant pen of Frank Hill.

It is a pleasure to recall the fact that some years later, when announcement of discontinuance of my daily London Letter was made, Yates wrote warmly inviting me to resume my old connection with the paper, or as he put it, "Wind up the Clock and Set the Hands Going Again." It would have been a pleasure to me to return to the fold. But with "Toby's Diary" going in *Punch*, the "Cross Bench" article a prominent feature in the *Observer*, not to mention "Pictures in Parliament" in the *Daily News*, I felt I could hardly hope to realise the glowing expectation expressed by Yates, and so declined.

Always a hard-worker, I never toiled so terribly as during my two years' connection with *Mayfair*. I had no knowledge of the commercial side of the business and no assistance from successive holders of the position of advertisement canvassers. Indeed one helped himself from our not lavishly supplied coffers. I transferred the "Clock" articles from *The World* under the title "On the Watch." In addition, I wrote most of

the paragraphs constituting "The Chat of the Fair," reviewed books, read all proofs, saw the paper to press, in addition to fulfilling the ordinary editorial function of planning the scheme of the paper each week and assigning various contributions to particular writers.

This would have been a fair week's work had I otherwise been disengaged. But the task of conducting, practically single-handed, a high-class weekly paper was merely an addition to the regular engagements of the week. I was concurrently manager of the Parliamentary corps of the *Daily News*, and wrote a daily summary varying in length from one column to two. Life in the House of Commons was a different thing then from the placid process of to-day. The Speaker took the Chair regularly at four o'clock: No one knew when he would quit it and relieve members of the Press Gallery from further attendance. All-night sittings were of regular occurrence. To get home before two o'clock in the morning was a rare luxury, suggesting a comparatively idle day. By Saturday morning the average labourer in this particular vineyard would gratefully seize the opportunity of lying in bed for an extra hour or two making holiday till Monday. As for me, whatever hour I got home from the House of Commons on Saturday morning, I was up and off to the Strand so as to be at my desk in the *Mayfair* office at ten o'clock. I remained there till seven or eight in the evening, hard at work all the time.

## XIV

### EDITOR OF THE *DAILY NEWS*

ONE July afternoon in the Session of 1885 Mr. Labouchere, then member for Northampton, invited me to join him in a cigarette in the terrace smoking-room. After some preliminary chat he suddenly asked me how I should like to be editor of a daily paper. My response was not enthusiastic. I was doing pretty well as I was, and the editorial position had no allurements.

"I'm thinking of the *Daily News*," he said quietly.

This was what the Marchioness in conversation with Dick Swiveller was accustomed to describe as "a wonner." The *Daily News* was at the height of its prosperity, alike in respect of circulation, revenue, and authority. It was the recognised organ of the Liberal party then in power. The editor was Mr. Frank Hill, one of the most brilliant writers on the British Press. He had held the position for many years, and seemed permanently throned in the seat of authority.

"What about Hill?" I asked. "Has he resigned?"

"Oh no," Labby airily explained. The proprietors were not satisfied with him; they thought the paper wanted fresh, more vigorous blood, and they unanimously agreed that I was the man who would infuse it.

Frank Hill was not effusive in his friendship. Shortly after I joined the paper he extended it to me,



and it remained unbroken to the end. When intimation of the change was communicated to him with the ordinary provision of notice, his proud spirit flared in open revolt. He shook the dust of the office from his feet, quitted Bouverie Street, and broke off terms of acquaintance with all his former colleagues save two. One was Justin McCarthy, whom no one could quarrel with (except Parnell); the other was the man who supplanted him.

I shrank from being the instrument of his professional ruin to my personal advantage, and declined the overtures made by Labouchere. There for some time the matter rested. In November, Labouchere approached me again on behalf of the proprietors, and the refusal was repeated. A month later the bolt fell on Hill's unexpectant head. There was a vacancy in the editorial room. If I did not fill it some one else would; so on the third time of asking I yielded.

In ordinary circumstances it would have been a difficult task for one inexperienced and comparatively young—I had just completed my forty-first year—to assume direction of a great London morning newspaper. The circumstances in which I presently found myself confronted were unprecedented. Hardly had I taken in hand the reins of editorial office than the historic "kite" was sent up from Leeds presaging Gladstone's conversion to Home Rule. As soon as Parliament met for the Session of 1886 the Queen's Speech confirmed the worst apprehensions. Straightway the Liberal party, a month earlier united, fresh from the polls with renewed authority, increased strength, was riven as by an earthquake. Distrust of the new departure was manifested throughout the country by the secession of many important newspapers that had for years been



proud to carry Gladstone's standard. In the metropolis the journalistic Thanes fled in a body from the doomed chieftain.

The question every one asked was, What will the *Daily News* do? It was one I, fresh to office, had to answer without aid or counsel for outside, or even time thoroughly to weigh the pros and cons of the situation. Probably because they were themselves divided on the subject the proprietors made no sign. The *Daily News* alone among London morning papers decided to follow the old leader under the old flag, albeit the latter had upon it some strange quarterings.

This was the beginning of the end. As the break in the Liberal party widened the position of the *Daily News* weakened. To some small extent its circulation fell off. More serious was the shedding of advertisements. From time to time in subsequent years the Home Rule bogey was set up again, party passion being instantly evoked. But the present generation cannot realise the bitterness created between life-long friends on the birth of the Home Rule scheme twenty-three years ago. As editor of the only London morning paper that remained staunch to the main body of Liberals, I was personally the object of almost frantic reviling. Scarcely a day passed without bringing me, generally in the form of a post-card, venomous accusations, occasionally scarcely veiled threats.

At the outset there was some embarrassment as to denominating the something more than a hundred seceders from the Liberal fold in the House of Commons. In the editorial columns of the *Daily News* they were named "Dissentient Liberals," which with paternal fondness I regarded as a rather neat compromise. The name stuck, and was generally adopted by Liberal

writers and speakers. With the section of party immediately concerned it was greeted with angry protest. Mr. Chamberlain in particular deeply resented it. Like the juryman who "never met such a lot of obstinate beggars" as the eleven colleagues who differed from him, he insisted that he and his followers were the true Liberals, preservers and guardians of its ancient traditions, the real Dissentients being the three-fourths of the party who stood by Gladstone.

Whilst the Round Table negotiations were going forward, and there was hope Mr. Chamberlain would follow out to the end what was at the time undoubtedly his desire—to reunite the Liberal party—I received a hint from a very high quarter that for the present at least it might be desirable for the *Daily News* to refrain from alluding to "Dissentient Liberals."

I never took kindly to the work of editing. Long accustomed to be answerable only for what I wrought out of my own head, I found myself responsible for the printed work of a whole army of contributors. It is worry that kills, not work. I was nearly done to death during my eighteen months' editorship of the *Daily News*. For the first time in my life I was obliged, under the doctor's orders, to repair for a three weeks' cure to one of the Continental sanatoriums.

Like Sancho Panza and Mr. Gladstone, I am endowed with the priceless gift of sleep. I once asked Mr. Gladstone how long he slept of nights.

"I always get seven hours," he said; "I should like eight, and I could do with ten."

For myself I always have a minimum of eight hours' sleep, beginning when I lay my head on the pillow, finishing when I am called in the morning with the surprising intelligence that it is time to get up.

When in the early days of the year 1887 I began to find myself lying awake in bed composing leading articles, or dictating answers to illimitable piles of letters, I decided it was time to find change of employment. I remember how the determination was borne in upon me on a Saturday night when I had gone down to country quarters in hope of finding rest through the week-end. I lay awake half the night tossing about in conflict with some difficult question of the day. When I went down to breakfast on the Sunday morning I told my wife that I would the next day attend the ordinary weekly meeting of the proprietors in Bouverie Street and hand in my resignation.

She was amazed that any one could at such short notice make up his mind on so momentous an issue. The decision meant not only renunciation of the wages of an ambassador, but abandonment of one of the highest positions in English journalism. I had nothing in prospect by way of compensation. I burned most of my boats when I accepted the editorship. Other hands wrote my daily letter for the provinces. My seat in the Press Gallery was occupied. These considerations did not deter me. I went up to town by an early train, so as to be in time for the meeting of the proprietors. Obtaining permission to join them, I handed back to the surprised circle the interests placed in my charge just twelve months earlier.

In accepting my resignation the proprietors passed a resolution expressing in flattering terms their regret at the severance and their appreciation of my many merits. It was arranged that I should remain in office for a further six months, during which period the secret of my pending vacation of the chair was strictly kept. Early in June, whispers of the change being heard, I

wrote the following letter to Edward Russell, then member for Glasgow:—

“ REFORM CLUB,

“ June 6, 1887.

“ MY DEAR RUSSELL,—As an old friend you may feel interested in knowing that I have resigned the editorship of the *Daily News*, a decision that will shortly take effect. That I should, after brief experience, voluntarily relinquish one of the highest positions on the Press is, I am warned by premonitory symptoms, calculated to excite the activity of the gossips. The reason is very simple. I accepted the editorship under considerable pressure, greatly against my inclination and distinctly from a feeling of loyalty to the paper with which I have had the honour and advantage of being connected for fourteen years. From the day I first sat in the editor's chair I have hankered after my box in the House of Commons, and now I am going back to it. That is all.

“ It is true that my accession to the editorial chair was contemporary with a political crisis which increased tenfold the ordinary difficulties of the position. The labour has been great and the pressure occasionally overwhelming. But I shall always look back with pleasure upon my brief tenure of office with the reflection that, promptly upon its commencement and consistently throughout its continuance, the *Daily News* alone among London papers, has espoused the cause of the people of Ireland. It is in a minority now; that has happened to it before. By-and-by the establishment of Home Rule in Ireland will be as absolutely a commonplace of English politics as is to-day free trade or household suffrage.”



I regarded this as the end of my long connection with the *Daily News*. Robinson decreed otherwise. He insisted upon my returning to my old place in the Gallery, occupied during my editorship by one of the corps—Alexander Paul—whom I had nominated as my successor. Here, again, there was the inevitable action of supplanting a man. Paul had done his work admirably, had come to look upon the appointment as a permanency; and why should I, to serve my private ends, turn him out? Robinson handsomely met this objection by promising to find Paul an appointment on the editorial staff which would make him a gainer rather than a loser by the change.

So at the opening of the Session of 1888, I, with a light heart, went back to my box in the Press Gallery of the House of Commons to draw "Pictures in Parliament" and direct the Parliamentary corps.



## XV

### A PAGE OF SECRET HISTORY

SINCE the conversion of Sir Robert Peel to Free Trade principles there has been in English history no deeper cleft in a political party than followed upon Mr. Gladstone's nailing the Home Rule flag to the Liberal masthead. The cases are curiously alike, inasmuch as it was the hand of a trusted leader that dealt the fatal blow.

The main incidents of the story of Mr. Gladstone's first Home Rule Bill are familiar to the public. Only a select few, dwindling in numbers as Death goes his round of visits, know how nearly the chasm in the Liberal ranks was closed up. There was a day, a very hour, in which had the expected, the absolutely pre-ordained, happened, the Liberal Party would have been reunited under the banner of Mr. Gladstone, there would have been no union of extreme Radicals with blue-blooded Tories, no seat for Mr. Chamberlain in a Cabinet presided over by the Marquis of Salisbury, no Unionist Party predominant in British politics for a period of sixteen years, with the history it wrote in the national annals.

To make the story clear it should be premised that in mid-December, 1885, a general election having declared for Mr. Gladstone by an overwhelming majority, a bolt suddenly flashed from the blue. The political

world was disturbed by publication of a paragraph appearing in a Leeds paper, with which Mr. Herbert Gladstone was known to have personal connexions, not obscurely hinting that the result of the election in Ireland had convinced Mr. Gladstone that, Home Rule being a national demand, it must forthwith be conceded.

In spite of heavy defeat at the polls Lord Salisbury resolved to meet the New Parliament, and was straightway defeated on an amendment to the Address moved by Mr. Jesse Collings embodying the principle crystallised in the phrase, "Three acres and a cow." Mr. Gladstone, called upon to form a ministry, found himself confronted by the banshee raised by the Leeds newspaper paragraph. Lord Hartington and Sir Henry James, failing to obtain satisfactory assurances on the Home Rule question, declined to take office, the latter for conscience' sake sacrificing the proffered prize of the woolsack, which never again came within his reach. Mr. Chamberlain and Sir George Trevelyan, though restive under the prospect, joined the Cabinet on the assurance that no measure imperilling the unity of the Empire would be introduced. Within a month, having gained fuller information of the Premier's purpose, they resigned, and Mr. Gladstone found himself confronted by one of the gravest political crises falling within his superlatively long and varied experience.

All was not yet lost. In the haze that gathers over historic events, even of recent occurrence, it is generally understood that what came to be known as the Liberal Unionist Party was fully created in this earliest hour of the cataclysm that rent the ministerial host. That is not the case. There were two sections

of Dissident Liberals, one represented by Lord Hartington, Mr. Goschen, and Sir Henry James, who would not have Home Rule on any terms; the other, the Radical Wing, under the lead of Mr. Chamberlain, strengthened by the approval of Mr. Bright. These did not object to the principle of Home Rule *per se*, but were strenuously opposed to anything which in their opinion would imperil the unity of the Empire. In this condition of things Mr. Gladstone's keen eye discerned opportunity. With the art of an old Parliamentary hand, he set himself to further divide the enemy and so re-establish his rule.

In the interval between the introduction of the Bill and the motion for its second reading, a game of intense interest, affecting not only the fortunes of a party, but the destinies of a nation, went on behind closed doors. Ninety-three members returned at the general election pledged to support Mr. Gladstone declared against the Home Rule Bill. Of these fifty-five were followers of Mr. Chamberlain, thirty-eight recognising their captain in Lord Hartington. If the fifty-five were recaptured, Mr. Gladstone might snap his fingers at the thirty-eight. What was needed to work out that end was an intermediary, trusted alike by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain. Heaven, occasionally timeously bountiful in its gifts, provided Mr. Labouchere.

I am fortunate in having been made the custodian of a vivid personal narrative of the events immediately preceding the motion for the second reading of the Home Rule Bill, written by the practised hand that up to a critical stage seemed to control them. In process of time, there was brought about a severance of the intimate relations formerly existing between two ultra-

Radicals which explains, and may serve to modify the effect of, any bitterness in the writer's references to his old familiar friend, Mr. Chamberlain.

Dating from Old Palace Yard, April 5, 1898, Mr. Labouchere writes :

"DEAR LUCY,—This is for you when a hundred years hence you publish memoirs of these times. There were two negotiations with Joe. The first was this: Gladstone agreed to draw up two clauses, one letting the Irish M.P.s sit on Imperial matters, the other dealing with finance of an Imperial character. This was agreed to at Downing Street by him and his colleagues. I went to Joe. After some demur he agreed, and I went back to Downing Street with the agreement written by me and dictated by him. Then I left London. The next day was Sunday. On my return I found a man with a note from Joe. He said that he had been deceived, that Gladstone was backing out, for he had told a Pressman on Saturday evening that he had yielded on nothing.

"I sent for Arnold Morley. This had happened. Joe had at once sent round a telegram with the words 'Absolute surrender.' One he had sent to O'Shea, who showed it to Parnell, and thus it came to Gladstone. But Parnell had been consulted and therefore merely sent it to show what a rascal Joe was. Gladstone being cross made the observation to the Pressman as a reply to Joe. He was at Glyn's house, at Sheen, and we sent a man on horseback to find out what I was to say to Joe. The reply was that it was true he had agreed to the two alterations; that he certainly would draw up the first amendment himself, but that as he had not made out the second, how could he



say that he could draw it up? But if Joe would, he had no doubt that he (G.) would accept it.

"I went with this to Joe. He said that it was a shirk, and that G. meant to say that he would not accept the amendment. Both got cross, and the arrangement lapsed. Joe was foolish in sending the telegram, but I always thought that G. was most in fault. He did so hate Joe.

"When later on there was a meeting of the Party at the F.O., Joe wrote me a letter for G. in which he said that, unless the Irish sat in Parliament, he was pledged against the Bill. I gave this to G. He read out a statement of what he would do. It was vague. I was sitting by Whitehead, and got him to get up and say, 'Then we understand that the Irish will sit.' G. glared at me and said, 'I do not understand the technicalities of drafting, so I will read again what I am prepared to do.' In fact, he would not admit that he had yielded.

"After this there was a meeting of M.P.s inclined to go against the Bill. It was engineered by Caine. They first passed a resolution that all would act together. Then a letter from Bright was read. I, having heard result, went to the Reform Club. There I found Bright, who eagerly asked what the meeting had decided. I said to vote against the Bill. He said that he regretted this. When I told him that it was due to his letter, he replied that he had only said that he should himself vote against the Bill. I reminded him that he had previously told me that he would vote neither way. He answered that he had been insulted by Sexton. I asked him to give me the letter for publication. He agreed to do so, but found that he had no copy. Just then Caine came in, and he said



to him, 'Give Labouchere my letter to publish.' Then he went out of the room. Caine refused to do this, and my impression always has been that only a portion of the letter was read.

"I several times told Joe afterwards that G. would make things right in his speech winding up the debate on the second reading. G. said he would. The day came. Joe sat behind me, and a member was to be put up to accept (I forget his name). G. said nothing definite. Joe cursed him, and went on saying to me, for he sat just behind, 'You hear.' When his speech was over, I begged a Whip to go to Gladstone to tell him that he had said nothing definite and asked whether it was to be understood that the Irish were to sit? He replied that that was what he meant. I told the Whip to go back and tell him that by his ambiguity in the House he had lost his Bill. On this there was despair. I was asked to find out whether Joe would receive Herschell. He refused, and said that he would have no more negotiations and should vote against the Bill. It was never clearly agreed that the Bill after the second reading should be shelved, but this was the intention.

"So now you have the facts for future generations. Such a lot of babies as Gladstone, Morley, Joe, and Bright I never came across. To a certain extent Gladstone was influenced by the idea that if defeated he would sweep the country on a dissolution. But he never could quite make up his mind to yield one inch to Joe. He was ready to do what was wanted to secure the votes of Joe and his friends. But this was to be understood, in order to avoid having actually yielded in so many words."

I am further fortunate in being able to complete

the narrative from the lips of an important witness drawn from the other side. Mr. W. S. Caine, to whose activity in the business Mr. Labouchere bears testimony, was the Chief Whip of the Liberal Unionist Party. Mr. Chamberlain selected him for the post whilst the Radical section stood alone, and he retained it when, in the dramatic circumstances related by Mr. Labouchere, the sections were bound together with a force that in due time became solidly and firmly amalgamated with the Conservative Party under the Premiership of Lord Salisbury. Later, Mr. Caine, like Sir George Trevelyan and some others, returned to the Liberal fold, his personal esteem and admiration for Mr. Chamberlain not fully surviving the changed circumstances.

Writing on April 25, 1898, Mr. Caine says—

“In the first week of April, 1886, Labouchere constituted himself a friendly broker between Gladstone and Chamberlain. At the time I urged Chamberlain not to employ him, but to refuse any negotiation that was not conducted by an old Cabinet colleague. I named Lord Herschell as the most suitable man. However, my advice was not taken, and the negotiations were entered into.

“Lord Hartington was not in the negotiations at all, and my impression is that he knew nothing about them. It was simply the Chamberlain group who would have been squared.

“On April 7, Labouchere brought his negotiations to a conclusion. Gladstone was to concede the retention of the Irish members. I was to rise immediately afterwards and say a few platitudes, giving Chamberlain time to consider the concessions made, and deal with them in a formal speech later on. However, the

G.O.M. went on and on, and not a word was said. He sat down without making the smallest concession, much to our astonishment and dismay. Labouchere, who was sitting just below me, turned round as Gladstone sat down, and made the characteristic remark, which has remained in my memory ever since—‘Isn’t the old man a thimble-rigger?’

“It soon leaked out that the negotiations had fallen through. Chamberlain told Captain O’Shea all about them. Captain O’Shea told Parnell. Parnell went storming down to Downing Street about two o’clock in the afternoon and knocked the whole arrangement into pie. These are the simple facts of that particular episode, which was a little private intrigue of Chamberlain’s own. I feel quite sure that Hartington knew nothing about it, had nothing to do with it, and would never have consented to it. It would only have secured the adhesion of the Chamberlain group. This would, however, have shaken the solidarity of the hundred stalwarts, and I think would have enabled Gladstone to pass the Bill by a majority of three or four.

“Two or three days before the final division—I forget the exact date—an offer came practically from Mr. Gladstone, agreeing to withdraw the Bill at once, if he got his second reading, recast it and reintroduce it in the following year. A private meeting of the Liberal Unionist section was convened by me in Committee room No. 15, to consider whether we should accept this compromise and vote for the Bill.

“I had to see Bright about it. He would never come to the House. I used to go to him at the Reform Club every evening at nine o’clock, and tell him what had gone on during the day. I saw him about this

meeting and begged him to come to it. This, however, he would not do. I asked him to write a letter, which he did. This letter I read to the meeting. It was simply to the effect that personally he objected to the compromise, but he would fall in with the decision arrived at by the meeting.

"There was, of course, a prolonged discussion. The man who was bitterest against any compromise, and most determined that the Bill should be thrown out, was not Bright, but George Trevelyan, who made a vehement speech which undoubtedly settled the line that the meeting took. We declined the compromise, and voted against the Bill.

"I did not keep Bright's letter. It was in great demand, as you may well imagine. I tore it into little bits and left it on the floor of the Committee room, without taking any copy. One enterprising journalist offered me a hundred pounds for it.

"I still believe that if Chamberlain had taken my advice, and refused to negotiate through such a born intriguer and dodger as Labouchere, and negotiated in the open through the medium of Herschell, or some other member of the Cabinet, the whole current of history would have been changed; but Chamberlain himself is a born intriguer, and loves it dearly. He and Hartington were never very cordial at that time, Hartington being always afraid that Chamberlain would sell the pass."

It will be observed that Mr. Caine is insistent on the fact, interesting to the future historian of the epoch, that Lord Hartington was not only no party to the negotiation with Mr. Gladstone that almost succeeded in healing the breach in the Liberal Party, but was



absolutely ignorant of what was going forward. In a letter addressed to me Lord James of Hereford puts the case with characteristic lucidity and moderation. "In the early part of 1886," he writes, "the Liberal Unionist Party had not settled down into the form it afterwards assumed. Mr. Chamberlain and Sir George Trevelyan, as you will recollect, accepted office under Mr. Gladstone. It was not till after their resignation that the Radical section of the Liberal Unionists developed their full strength. Thus it came to pass that during a portion of the spring and early summer of 1886 Lord Hartington was not acting in the close alliance with Mr. Chamberlain which afterwards existed."

By a striking coincidence the eventful meeting of Mr. Chamberlain's following, summoned at the last moment to decide what course they would take on the motion for the second reading of the Home Rule Bill, was held in Committee room No. 15, later the scene of the disruption of the Parnellites and the deposition of their chief. Fifty-five members obeyed the summons. They held in the palm of their hand the fate of the Ministry. If they rallied to their old leader, the second reading of the Home Rule Bill would be carried. If they walked out without voting, it would creep through. If they voted against it the Bill must go, with it the great Leader, and a ministry but yesterday nominated as a result of overwhelming triumph at the polls.

I was told by one present that Mr. Chamberlain submitted the issue in a manner the gravity of which indicated conception of its momentous importance, and in a judicial tone that befitted the occasion. Doubtless without intentional irony he adopted the method Mr.



Gladstone made familiar at great crises. There were, he said, three courses open to them. They might support the second reading of the Bill; they might vote against it; they might abstain from voting. He declined to take the responsibility of advocacy of one or other, confining himself to brief summary of what would follow on adoption of the several courses. He suggested that, in order to arrive at unmistakable decision by the broadest process, they should take a second ballot.

On the first division, of the fifty-five silently and solemnly taking part in it, thirty-nine voted against the second reading, three declared in favour of it, whilst thirteen stood aside. On the second ballot, the three who voted for the second reading—on the understanding conveyed by Mr. Gladstone at a meeting of the Liberal Party held at the Foreign Office on May 27, that the Bill would thereafter be dropped, to be brought in again the following year, minus the clause excluding Irish members from Westminster—stood to their guns. Of the abstainers, nine went over to the majority, and the fate of the Government was sealed.

At one o'clock on the morning of June 8, 1886, the division was called, and by a majority of thirty in a House of 656 members the Home Rule Bill was thrown out. Of the 345 members who achieved this stroke, only 250 were Conservatives, a number impotent to withstand the rush of the crusade led by Mr. Gladstone. It was the ninety-three Dissident Liberals, the united forces of Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Hartington, who turned the scale.

## XVI

### THE DUNMOW FLITCH

OCTOBER 29, 1873, I count as the most fortunate day of my life. Upon it I married the daughter of my old schoolmaster, an acquaintance going back to childhood. Whatever measure of success I have obtained in life is largely owing to her counsel, example, and inspiration.

On September 14, 1897, the following paragraph appeared in the *Daily News*:—

“Mr. and Mrs. Henry Lucy yesterday visited Dunmow. Inquiry into the circumstances and conditions of their married life satisfying the requirements of the ancient institutions, they were awarded a flitch of bacon. The presentation was made by Mr. John Aird, M.P., in a graceful speech.”

The announcement had a remarkable run through town and country papers. Sir Wilfrid Lawson, even more ready than Mr. Silas Wegg, dropped into poetry—

“And is it true that you have gained  
The Matrimonial laurel,  
And have you all these years remained  
Without a single quarrel.

“No ripple on the glassy sea,  
No breeze upon the air,  
No bitter in the cup of tea,  
To discompose the pair ?

“How very good you both must be  
As life’s sweet flowers you cull.  
But was it not—oh! tell to me—  
Just, just a little dull?”

Sir Charles M’Laren, less accustomed to woo the muses, was also led astray—

“For wedded lives without a hitch  
Old Dunmow cures the tasty flitch;  
So at the feast for them prepared,  
And blessed by bounteous Father Aird,  
Our Lucys, who the genial cake  
For mirth and kindness ever take,  
Now, for their lovers’ faith unshaken,  
In triumph carry off the bacon.”

Phil May drew an exquisite sketch showing me riding off triumphantly on pig-back. Most amusing in the multitude of commentaries on the event was the remark of a Press Gallery man of the old school joining in conversation on the topic in the Smoking Room.

“Always the way,” he remarked gruffly, puffing at his pipe. “To him that hath shall be given. Lucy can afford to pay for flitches of bacon. There’s many a better fellow has to buy it by the pound; yet he gets the flitch.”

A pleasing communication evoked by the incident was a letter written from Sir Charles and Lady M’Laren’s country house in Denbighshire. The writer, sister of John Bright, mother of Sir Charles M’Laren, was one of the sweetest-natured, daintiest-mannered ladies I was ever privileged to know. In face she was beautiful. In spite of her many years her mind was as

alert, her interest in affairs as keen, as if she were still thirty. She wrote to a friend in Edinburgh—

“Mr. and Mrs. Lucy are here. Don’t you remember how interested we were two years ago in reading of their having won the Dunmow Flitch of Bacon, and thinking it showed much moral courage in claiming it? But *I* can understand now how they claimed and won it.

“They have between them a beautiful and interesting combination of mental conditions, such as go to make the wheels of daily life go smoothly round.

“Mrs. L. has a most sweet, unselfish nature—whilst her husband can relieve the seriousness of life by intelligent and intellectual humour. He is gifted intellectually, as you know, and she exerts a refining spiritual influence over all. This latter quality has been very sweet and comforting to me in the conversations I have had with her. In short, I have felt it a privilege to be here with them, though regretting much that the need of rest after some months of entertaining at home has necessitated my keeping my own room a good deal—a real self-denial for me, as you may suppose. Your friend, Sir Wilfrid Lawson, judged wrongly. There can be no dullness in such a life. There can be great and pleasing variety without the unpleasantness of opposition.”

After this it is painful to be obliged to confess that the whole thing was a hoax. What really happened was that, in accordance with custom extending over many years, we were spending a week in the autumn with Sir John and Lady Aird. He had no country house, but was accustomed early in the year

to make a selection out of mansions in the market for temporary occupation. As soon as arrangements were made, he hospitably engaged us for a week's stay. In this year he found his rest-house in Essex, not far distant from Dunmow, famous chiefly for its ancient custom of bestowing a prize of a flitch of bacon upon a couple who can vow that their married life has been undisturbed by quarrelsome words. One afternoon we drove thither. John Aird pulled up the carriage at a grocer's shop, entered and presently returned, accompanied by an aproned man carrying a flitch of bacon. This, Sir John, with bared head, and, as the paragraph lapsing into truth says, in a graceful speech presented to Mrs. Lucy.

How these things get into the papers, I know no more than did Mr. Crummles when he read in the local sheet a paragraph extolling the gifts of his theatrical company, and making light of Charles Kean, or Phelps, in comparison with its manager. There are thousands of people, in addition to my friend of the Press Gallery, who to this day firmly believe that Mrs. Lucy and I submitted ourselves and our case to the ancient tribunal at Dunmow, and won the flitch of bacon against all comers.



## XVII

FRED BURNABY

I MET Fred Burnaby up in a balloon, forming an acquaintance rapidly ripening into friendship that lasted to the day of his untimely death at Abu Klea. The date was the autumn of 1874. Some weeks earlier a couple of French aeronauts, M. and Madame Durouf, had arranged to make an ascent from Calais. The wind was high, blowing out across the Channel. If they mounted their fate was inevitable. They would be driven out to sea with little chance of escape from drowning. They wanted to postpone the ascent, but maddened by the jeers of the throng who had paid for admission to the grounds whence ascent was to be made, they entered the car, the ropes were loosened, and the balloon was soon over the sea and out of sight. Dropping into the water the passengers were happily rescued by a passing boat, and brought to an English port. Arrangements were subsequently made for an ascent from the grounds of the Crystal Palace, and all the world went down to see them off.

Having lately joined the staff of the *Daily News*, and anxious to distinguish myself, I resolved to accompany them. Unfortunately the idea had occurred to many others. When I approached Mr. Coxwell with a five-pound note in proffered payment of the fare, he, with many protestations of regret, informed me there

was no room. Every available seat in the car had been taken and paid for in advance. This was disappointing, there being left for me nothing but the commonplace task of describing the ascent from the safety of *terra firma*. In quite a new reading of the saying, the wind was tempered to the shorn lamb. Just before the balloon was timed to start a storm sprang up. The great globe of silk swayed hither and thither in fearsome fashion. Mr. Glaisher, who was in charge of the expedition, looking at the darkening sky, sniffing the growing storm, put his veto upon Madame Durouf joining the voyagers.

"We are not in France," he said. "An English crowd will not insist upon a woman facing danger for their amusement. The voyage will be rough, the descent perilous, so Madame had better stay with us."

If Madame was not going, there would be room for me. I pointed this out to Mr. Coxwell, but he was inexorable. He held in his hand a list of at least thirty people who had booked seats. When everything was ready, the French aeronaut and Mr. Coxwell's assistant aboard, the list of names was called aloud. Only the wind howling among the trees made answer.

"*Il faut partir*," said M. Durouf, looking anxiously at the angry sky. A middle-aged gentleman who had come to town from Cambridge, and early secured his seat, fearlessly took it. I followed, making myself as scarce as possible at the bottom of the car. Then tumbled in a handsome fellow, six feet four in height, broad-chested to boot. I remember wondering when he would finish getting his full length in.

This was Fred Burnaby, at the time ranking as Captain in the Horse Guards Blue, unknown to fame outside the barracks, with Khiva unapproached, the

wilds of Asia Minor untrodden by his horse's hoofs. He told me later he had run down to see the ascent, and was strolling about the grounds in company with Musurus Pasha, the Turkish Minister. When the defection of the dauntless thirty was apparent, he instantly seized the situation. If they didn't go there would be room for him. Shouldering his way through the crowd, he got aboard the car just as the ropes were let go, and the balloon with a mighty rush soared upwards. He had arranged a dinner party at his rooms in St. James's Street that night. How they fared I forgot to ask. Certainly Burnaby was not with them, being at the appointed dinner hour seated with me in a tumble-down market cart, as we made our way after our aerial voyage through an Essex lane towards the nearest railway station. As things turned out, we had a delightful trip, rising to a height of 3000 feet clear of the storm.

It was in the following year that Burnaby made his famous "Ride to Khiva." I have before me as I write an early copy of the fascinating story. In his almost illegible handwriting it is inscribed, "H. Lucy, Esqre, from his sincere friend the author. Oct. 27, 1876." Under this pen-and-ink blotch is written, happily in pencil, "Two maps still to come."

His next book, "On Horseback through Asia Minor," for the publication of which I arranged with Sampson Low, is inscribed, "To Mrs. Lucy, from her sincere friend the author. November 4, 1877." It is pretty to see how Burnaby, addressing a lady, with instinctive politeness makes desperate effort to write legibly, and almost succeeds. On ordinary occasions his letters and MS. suggested that they were written with a skewer dipped in a blacking pot. On all his

journeys save the last, which ended at Abu Klea, he brought Mrs. Lucy a present from the far-off land. We still have, to all appearances as good as new, a table-cloth, silk-embroidered, he bought for her in a bazaar in Asia Minor. To me, on return from the same journey, he presented a cigarette-holder of rare silver filigree work, with mouthpiece of flawless amber.

It was at his table I first sat at meat with Lord Randolph Churchill. On the eve of departure of Mrs. Lucy and myself in 1883 on a journey round the world, Burnaby gave, at the Junior Carlton Club, a farewell dinner in my honour. He told me he had shown Lord Randolph the list of the company and asked him whom he would like to sit next to.

"Between Lucy and Burnand," he replied. So it was arranged, and a jolly evening we spent, Randolph being at his very best.

As a souvenir Burnaby presented me with a costly walking-stick picked up during a recent visit to Spain. Unfortunately I took it with me on the tour, but not further than St. Louis. Leaving it with my hat and coat on a chair in the dining-room whilst we lunched, on going to seek my belongings I found the precious stick had departed.

The last glimpse I caught of Burnaby was as he stood at the gate of his ancestral home, Somerby Hall, in Leicestershire. We had been spending a week with him, and on the invitation of our mutual friend Doetsch, who brought the Rio Tinto Mine property to England and remained one of its directors, it was arranged that in the winter we three—Mrs. Lucy, Burnaby, and myself—should go out to Spain as his guests. Before the appointed time came the war trumpet sounded from the Soudan, and Burnaby was



off at its call. It was September, 1884, we were his guests at Somerby Hall. In November he started for the seat of war.

At first he was engaged in superintending the movements of troops between Tanjour and Magrakeh, but he ever pined to get into the fighting line. In a letter, dated Christmas Eve, 1884, he writes: "I don't expect the last boat will pass the Cataract before the middle of next month, and then I hope to be sent to the front. It is a responsible post Lord Wolseley has given me here, with forty miles of the most difficult part of the river, and I am very grateful to him for letting me have it. But I must say I shall be better pleased if he sends for me when the troops advance upon Khartoum."

The order came in due course, and Burnaby was riding to the relief of Gordon when his journey was stopped at Abu Klea. He was attached to the Staff of General Stewart, whose little force of 1800 men was suddenly surrounded by a herd of Dervishes 9000 strong. The British troops formed in square, mounted officers directing the desperate defence that again and again beat back the angry torrent. A soldier in the excitement of the moment got outside the square and engaged in hand-to-hand conflict with a cluster of Arabs. Burnaby, seeing his peril, rode out to the rescue—"with a smile on his face," as one who saw him tells me—and was making irresistible way against the odds, when a Dervish thrust a spear in his throat, and he fell off his horse dead.

Among his comrades was Lord Charles Beresford, who writes:

"With regard to the reminiscences you ask me for,



of my old friend Fred Burnaby—I remember just getting up to where he was encamped before proceeding across Biouda Desert on Christmas Eve. Lord Wolseley had sent for me to take charge of the Naval Brigade, so as to man the Gordon steamer, which we supposed would meet us at Matemah. Burnaby managed to get a plum-pudding from somewhere. We had our Christmas dinner, and a cheery night we had. I started at 4 o'clock the next morning.

“The next time I saw Burnaby was when the forlorn hope formed up to go across Biouda Desert for the relief of Gordon. He was full of fun and banter. Before Abu Klea, he and I made a zareba, thinking the people would attack us at night. The enemy came very close with their tom-toms, but they never attacked. It was an exciting night. We could hear the tramp of the Mahdi's hosts close by, and listened to the beating of the tom-toms, often furiously hurried, sometimes reduced to a single beat similar to that of a heart. They drew off before daylight.

“The next day we left the zareba, formed up and left for Abu Klea. In the morning the hills were full of riflemen, and we were losing men and camels. I had my men lying down under a little wall of stones which I ordered them to build, firing at the Dervishes on one of the hills nearest us. Burnaby and Stewart, attended by a soldier carrying the Union Jack, were on a little mole about eighty yards from the hollow where I and my men were standing up. I heard the thud of a bullet. I think it was the bugler or one of the soldiers who was killed. I was going towards Stewart and Burnaby to beg them to dismount and put down the flag when a bullet killed Burnaby's horse, and sent him rolling down the hillock.

"He picked himself up, and I asked him if he was hit. All he said was this: 'My dear Charlie, I am not in luck to-day.' I persuaded Stewart to get off his horse and not make a mark for the Mahdi's riflemen. We then formed up and marched down towards Abu Klea.

"We got some breakfast before we started. I remember the incident well because my Maltese interpreter, who looked after me, was boiling some coffee in a tin pannikin over a little fire made of bits of stick. A bullet came into the fire and knocked the coffee to Ballyhooly, sending it all over him. He bellowed like a bull, and said: 'Why these people fire at me, sir, I never do these people any harm?'

"We formed up, marched to Abu Klea, when we were attacked by about 8000 people on our left flank. I caught sight of Burnaby on his horse outside the square, within about forty yards of where I was standing at the machine-gun before the charge. Every one at the gun was killed except myself. The next I saw of poor Fred Burnaby he was lying on his back, cut to pieces, at about the place where I had last seen him alive."

Archibald Forbes sent me in fuller detail a vivid word picture of an episode which, in the hurried march and the catastrophe looming over Khartoum, received at the time but scant record—

"Burnaby's position immediately before his sally from the square at Abu Klea was on the left face of the square near the rear corner. The men at his back were the detachment of Royal Dragoons (my own old regiment) belonging to the Heavy Camel Corps. As the skirmishers came running in, the last couple of them

were hard pressed by the pursuing Arabs, and two of them were killed. Burnaby rode out a little way to the assistance of the in-running skirmishers, his only arm being his sword—he had left his double-barrelled gun with his servant inside the square. His own horse had been shot that morning, and he was riding a screw borrowed from the 19th Hussar detachment. He rode straight at a mounted Sheikh chasing a skirmisher with levelled spear. At sight of him, the Arab changed direction and made for Burnaby.

“Just as they were closing a young soldier named Laporte sent a bullet through the Arab, who fell with a crash. A foot spear’s-man promptly darted on Burnaby, pointing at his throat the broad, sharp blade of his eight-foot long spear. Burnaby parried, and wounded the Moslem. The duel between them continued for above a minute, Burnaby cutting, pointing, and parrying, the supple Arab lunging vicious thrusts at the big British officer fast in the saddle. A second Arab, darting by in pursuit of a skirmisher, with a sudden turn ran his spear into Burnaby’s right shoulder from behind. A soldier darted out and bayoneted this man. Burnaby glanced over his shoulder for a second at the transaction, and in that second his first antagonist dashed his spear full into Burnaby’s throat. He fell from the saddle, the blood spurting from the jugular; as he sank the Arab stabbed him a second time, and he lay prone.

“A rush of Arabs were upon him. He had strength enough to struggle to his feet, and with the blood pouring from his gashed throat, he whirled his sword around him till he fell dead. Young Laporte sprang to his aid, and got so near that his sleeve was wet with Burnaby’s blood. But he could give no efficient

assistance, and was lucky in being able to return to the square.

"During the Nile Campaign, Sir William Gordon-Cumming wrote constantly to the Prince of Wales, describing the progress of the campaign. Some of those letters I have seen. In the letter describing Abu Klea, Cumming tells of Burnaby's death, and how he ran out in hope to bring his wounded comrade in. Three of the Arabs who had been hacking at Burnaby came at Cumming. 'One of these,' wrote Cumming, 'I bowled over with a bullet through the stomach from my revolver. Before starting on the desert march I had my sword ground as sharp as a razor. When the second man neared me, I cut his head clean off with one blow. Number three dodged, and as I was following him, he was shot dead by a bullet fired from the square.'

"When Burnaby arrived at Korti, Wolseley appointed him first to the Intelligence Department, and later to a position on his own staff. After Stewart had gone forward to Jakdul, Wolseley bethought himself of possible contingencies, and sent up Burnaby with about one hundred camels to join Stewart, and with Wolseley's order in his pocket to take command in case of casualty to Stewart. Meanwhile, he was not to be on Stewart's staff, but as the expression is in the German army and in our diplomatic service, *en disponibilité*, and he devoted himself to the Intelligence Service. On the night before Abu Klea Stewart gave him command of a section of the square, which constituted him in effect Brigadier-General for the time. He was thus acting Brigadier-General when he was killed."

He sleeps now, as he always yearned to rest, in a

soldier's grave, dug by chance on the Dark Continent whose innermost recesses he hoped some day to explore. The date of his death is January 17, 1885. His grave is nameless. Its place in the lonely desert no man knoweth.

1885

1885  
 The first of the year was a very cold one, and the snow was very deep. The wind was very strong, and the sun was very bright. The weather was very good, and the people were very happy. The first of the year was a very cold one, and the snow was very deep. The wind was very strong, and the sun was very bright. The weather was very good, and the people were very happy.



## XVIII

### A HAUNTED TABLE

IN accordance with one of the rules on which the constitution of the Reform Club is based, the Political Committee are permitted once a year to elect, without ballot, two gentlemen "who have proved their attachment to the Liberal cause by marked and obvious services rendered to it." Twenty-six years ago the committee did me the honour of electing me, so averting the risk of the ballot-box, and dispensing with the occasionally prolonged delay of coming up for the poll. Thus was made a coveted opening into what, with wide experience of hospitality elsewhere, I regard as the best club in London—the most home-like, the most fully equipped with sustenance, whether provided from the kitchen and the cellar, or found in the splendid library.

A certain table in the dining-room is haunted by precious memories. A quarter of a century ago there began to frequent it a little coterie numbering from six to eight. At most five could be seated at luncheon. On the daily average room for four sufficed. The little club within a club had no prescriptive right to this or any other table. But possession was courteously recognised. A member, not being one of the little set, would as soon have thought of seating himself at the desk of the head waiter as of appropriating one of the chairs at this little table by the window.

Up to a period so recent as four years ago remnants of the Old Guard still gathered round it for the midday luncheon though with saddened memories of unforgotten faces, well-remembered voices. Here through many years sat James Payn, his kindly humour, flashing wit, irradiating the table talk. Next to him was spectacled William Black, not nearly so sombre as he looked. Most frequently the odd man at the end of the table, George Augustus Sala, habitually a late comer, poured forth a flood of commentary upon a world about which his knowledge was extensive and peculiar. Opposite James Payn, through thirty years of unremitting attendance, sat J. R. Robinson, in his last years modestly, but with just satisfaction, bearing the title Sir John.

On Robinson's right hand sat Wemyss Reid, who also in time came to be knighted. Originally on the Parliamentary staff of the *Standard*, Reid went to Leeds as editor of the *Mercury*, which he had served for many years as London correspondent. He had a wide and intimate acquaintance with leading men of the Liberal Party. Of one, W. E. Forster, he wrote a biography which ranks high in its class of literature. He also wrote his own, which inexplicably fell short of reasonable expectation. He often spoke to me about the work as it grew in his hands.

"It will make some of them sit up," he used to say, his shoulders shaking with the laughter of anticipatory glee.

Possibly, owing to exigencies arising out of the date of publication, it may have been edited with discreet severity. It is understood there is a second volume in existence which will supply more spicy reading.

In the height of his success as a novelist, William

Black took up his residence at Brighton, and was not found regularly at his old place at the Table. When in town he invariably turned up for luncheon, with its pint of champagne, as indispensable as was Tennyson's "perfect pint of port." He had chambers in Buckingham Street, whither, after dinner at the Reform, or on chance meeting at some other hospitable board, it was his custom to carry off a few friends who sat far into the night, chatting over pipes and cigars, comforted by the knowledge that in the recesses of the sideboard were whisky and soda galore. The last time I saw Black, an old colleague on the *Daily News*, we foregathered at a dinner in the city, given, I think, by a firm or society of publishers. There were a few toasts. I remember the reply of that to Literature was committed to the charge of a voluminous contributor to what is, or used to be, known as the "Kailyard School of Fiction." The author of "A Princess of Thule" and "A Daughter of Heth" did not make any remark on this strange preference. Coming from such authoritative quarter, it struck me as a curious slight upon an Old Master.

Most of his letters to me are undated as to the year, and nearly all touch on his passionate pleasure in fishing—

"PASTON HOUSE, PASTON PLACE, BRIGHTON,

"Feb. 29.

MY DEAR LUCY,

"I shall be delighted to dine with you on the 13th, and I will try not to look too elated—the fact being that it's on the very next day, the 14th as ever was, that I hope to start away north for six weeks' salmon fishing, and with no work to bother me till the

following May. But of course I wouldn't *say* such a thing to those poor wretches up from the House: it shall be a dark secret.

"I hope Mrs. Lucy is very well: please present my kind regards and remembrances.

"Yours sincerely,

"WILLIAM BLACK."

"LANGWELL LODGE BY LAIRG, N.B.

"March 10.

"MY DEAR LUCY,

"It is indeed kind of you to send me not only one invitation but a choice of two; and I am exceedingly chagrined that I cannot except either. I remain here till the end of April—that is to say, if there is a chance of getting away then. At present we are entirely entombed. If you have any means of communicating with Dr. Nansen, you might tell him he may as well abandon his expedition to the North Pole. *I am there*. When we got up here, we were welcomed by a series of howling gales and hurricanes—snow, sleet, and blinding hail; and now everything is frozen up and white and hard, and the cold intense. And where does the fishing come in? There ain't no fishing. But at least I have a companion—who walks up and down the room singing 'The Lost Chord' at the pitch of his voice and all out of tune. So you may imagine that I have to give up the idea of a snug evening in Queen's Mansions with something like regret.

"Very kind regards to Mrs. Lucy.

"Yours sincerely,

"WILLIAM BLACK.

"P.S.—If ever I *do* get a salmon—But what is the use of talking about it!"

“LANGWELL LODGE BY LAIRG, N.B.,  
“March 23.

“MY DEAR LUCY,

“I send you by this morning's mail a salmon that ought to reach you by Monday morning. 'Tis a token that we have at last escaped from that grim wrestle with the Demons of snow and ice, and have emerged into pleasant—and fishing—spring weather. Please tell Mrs. Lucy not to be alarmed by the wound in the creature's side: that is the mark—the honourable mark—of the gaff; whereas the salmon you get in the shops have all been captured by the rascally sneaking nets.

“Good weather to you both for your Easter holidays!

“Yours sincerely,

“WILLIAM BLACK.

“I am very glad indeed you like ‘Briseis.’ I wonder if you noticed the little joke about ‘tous les chats sont gris’ which I repeated at your house one night. It was told me by John Cross—George Eliot's husband; but I forget the name of the gay youth who invented it.”

Another, to the general public a less well-known frequenter of the table, was J. C. Parkinson, affectionately known as “Parkey.” He, too, was an old *Daily News* man, and was one of the band Charles Dickens gathered round him in the early days of *Household Words*. Like Edmund Yates he had a post in one of the Government offices, using literature as a staff. He was never so busy as when he retired from official life and active journalism. A kind-hearted, genial man, of wide experience, he knew most people, and



everybody liked him. Nevertheless, his intimate friends were accustomed to poke fun at what is, perhaps, the most futile of human foibles. To the last, when he had passed the stage of three score years and ten, his hair preserved an almost truculent air of undimmed blackness.

"Never mind," said Comyns Carr, one day when some one commented on this phenomenon, "Parkey isn't nearly so black as he's painted."

Amid the brilliance of this little company, James Payn shone with resplendent light. Known to a wide circle of readers as a charming essayist, a novelist of thrilling power, the display of his gifts as a raconteur were necessarily confined to a much narrower circle. He invariably had an anecdote illustrative of some turn in the conversation, and so vast was his store, I do not recall an instance when he repeated himself. His delight in the humour of the situation described was contagious.

He was devoted to whist. Considering his extensive and important business in connection with the editorship of *Cornhill*, he surprised himself by the success with which he arranged it so as to get a rubber at the Reform before going home to dinner. It was also W. E. Forster's custom of an afternoon to look in at the card room and take a hand at whist. He was an indifferent player, sometimes doing things which to his partner momentarily seemed worse than the introduction of a Coercion Bill for Ireland. Once with Payn as his partner he exceeded his average of blundering.

Observing a look of consternation clouding his countenance he said, "Never mind, Payn. If it will be any relief to your feelings you may call me 'Buck-shot Forster.'"

That was the nick-name bestowed upon the Irish Secretary by the Parnellites in scornful recognition of what Mr. Forster designed as a humanitarian device. Instead of loading their rifles with ball, which might kill, he directed that in anticipation of conflict with a riotous crowd, buckshot, which would only wound, should be served out to the police.

When the grip of rheumatism slowly tightening on Payn's frail figure, kept him a prisoner in his room, his old companions at the whist table devised a little plan that gave him infinite pleasure. Since he could not go to the Reform Club for his afternoon game, the Reform Club would go to him in the persons of a set of members sufficient to make up a hand at whist in the parlour at Warrington Crescent. There were always three ready to take a turn, and thus it came to pass that the invalid's painful vigil in bed, or on the sofa in the ground-floor room to which he was confined, was cheered by a frequent rubber.

Payn's gentle nature made him almost extravagantly grateful for any little attention. Mrs. Lucy used to send him flowers from her garden. Writing was painful to him, accomplished only by use of a pencil. But he never failed to send a pretty note in acknowledgment. Here is one dated Feb. 18th. Like Black, he took no note of years. A reference to changes in the *Daily News* fixes it at 1900.

"43, WARRINGTON CRESCENT, MAIDA VALE, W.

"DEAR MRS. LUCY,

"How kind of you to remember the cripple, and send him the flowers he will never cull for himself. They were lovely, and breathe of the spring.

"I see your husband is very busy as usual. I

wonder how the changes in the *Daily News* strike him. I notice no longer Lang's hand in its columns. Even in London we have fine weather. How pleasant it must be at Hythe.

"Yours most truly,

"JAMES PAYN."

"10th June.

"DEAR MRS. LUCY,

"I cannot forbear writing a line of thanks for your beautiful roses, and (especially) for the kind thought that suggested sending them. If your kind hands packed them your wrist, as I hope it is, must be quite well again.

"A pleasant holiday for you both. I shall always think of you associated with roses. My wife joins with me in kindest regards.

"Yours very truly,

"JAMES PAYN."

One reason that made Sir John Robinson's record of attendance at the luncheon-table exceed that of any other *habitué* was his horror of holidays. He found pleasure and recreation in work, and had no sympathy with men who must needs go abroad for a month or six weeks in the year, breaking up the monotonous interval by week-ending at Brighton or other health resort. Exercise was all very well. If a man wanted to walk, why, there was Fleet Street. Regularly through six days a week Robinson, having spent the morning in Bouverie Street directing the affairs of a great newspaper, on the stroke of half-past twelve "took a walk down Fleet Street" till he was overtaken

by the first 'bus going westward as far as the bottom of the Haymarket. This he hailed and was conveyed to his beloved Club, and the bright society that clustered round the little table by the window.

Among other points of sympathy between Robinson and James Payn was the conviction that within the bounds of Ludgate Hill and Hyde Park, London possessed every convenience and necessity of life the heart of man could desire. If under family or friendly compulsion either left town for a holiday, long or short—and three days were counted long—he went forth as if his goal were the scaffold. Once, greatly daring, they set out for a Saturday to Monday excursion to Winchelsea and Rye. Of the attractions of the old Cinque Ports they had heard much from the sitting member, a club colleague (Inderwick) though not belonging to *the* table. For weeks after their return their account of the expedition rivalled in interest Captain Cook's log of an even more distant voyage. Walking about the ancient streets of Rye they (so they said) did not come across a living soul. Straying into the yard of an inn, equally deserted, they observed a horseless omnibus. Opening the door they found the driver seated inside fast asleep.

"Ah," said James Payn, with a sigh of satisfaction, "here's the population."

The spirit of enquiry thoroughly aroused, they rambled on till they came upon the upland overlooking the sea. Time was when Rye proudly ranked among the Five Ports, generously contributing its quota to Plantagenets and Tudors for defence of the island. Now, the wayward sea standing afar off, there is visible between its marge and the ancient town a desolate stretch of shingle and sand.



"Well," murmured Robinson, forlornly gazing around, "this is the dullest place I ever saw."

"Yes," said Payn, "even the sea has deserted it."

Hurrying back to the station, where with well-rewarded foresight they had left their portmanteaux before making reconnaissance, they caught the train to town, dining late but happy at the Club in Pall Mall.

Brighton, as being within an hour's run by rail, and in other respects a suburb of London, was more attractive to Robinson. In summer time, during the last ten or twelve years of his life, he frequently ran down on a Saturday afternoon, compromising with his conscience by returning to business at an abnormally early hour on Monday morning. Wherever he might be, his heart, untravelled, fondly turned to Bouverie Street. Once, and only once, I induced him to spend a week-end in the country with me. He bore up with fortitude through the Sunday, taking delight in relating his monologue addressed to a cow in the early morning. He had been awakened about six o'clock by a cow lowing in a neighbouring pasture. I fancy it was not without a certain feeling of pride he recognised the origin and nature of the untimely interruption of sleep. Some town-bred folk of less keen intuitive perception might have thought it was a horse neighing.

"Now, my good cow," Robinson, with that chuckling laugh that accompanied his abundant story-telling, reported himself as having said, "that will do for the present. I know what you want. What do you think of the 'largest circulation in the world'? and what are your views on the policy of rival enterprise in bill-posting? But if you'll just be quiet five minutes I'll get to sleep again."

Here the cow broke in with a fresh burst of even



more anguished lowing, Robinson continuing his remonstrance and entreaty whenever the noise subsided.

Walking to the station on Monday morning to catch the nine o'clock train to London, he had scarcely closed the garden gate when in eager whisper he said—

“Where can I get the *Daily News*?”

On hearing that it did not arrive till the next train, he relapsed into moody silence. Evidently he did not know whether to pity or despise a community that could not have the *Daily News* on their table before eight o'clock breakfast. I forget whether his visit to Hythe preceded or followed his excursion to Rye. Putting the two together, he had a very low opinion of the Cinque Ports.

The innocent prattling humour, disclosed in his conversation with the cow, will be a revelation of character to some of Robinson's newspaper staff at home and abroad. Actually, as some of us were privileged to know, he was the kindest-hearted, most generous-natured man in the world; gentle-mannered, even to timidity. Give him a pen in hand, a sheet of notepaper before him, and some *laches* calculated to hurt a hair of the head of the *Daily News*, and he was a perfect ogre. During my long captaincy of the parliamentary staff of the paper I have seen veteran members of the corps grow pale when a messenger has handed to them a note addressed in Robinson's unmistakable hieroglyph. Only a sentence or two, but every word a spike driven under the fifth rib.

*Experientia docet.* On a Christmas time, now, alack! thirty-five years sped, it occurred to me that seasonable copy was to be made out of a visit to the old almshouse at Rochester where, at an earlier

Yuletide, Charles Dickens lodged his "Seven Poor Travellers." I went down, made a careful survey of the hostelry, had a friendly conversation with the housekeeper, and wrote an article purporting to be the experience of a strolling paper-stainer who had spent in the almshouse the night on which Christmas Day dawned. I still treasure—praise was rarer, more precious, in those days—a note received from Robinson on the day the article appeared. As usual, it was short; as customary, it was pointed; happily it was kind. "If this is not genius," so it ran, "it is something very like it."

Approbation from Sir Hubert Stanley, especially when he is one's commander, with the keys of promotion in his pocket, is praise indeed. I felt more than rewarded for my winter journey down to Rochester. But there is a cloud to most silver linings. For the dramatic purposes of my article, the six other Poor Travellers having gone to roost, I brought in the matron, with a jug of porter in her hand, representing her as saying, "I'm not going to bed myself for a bit, and if you like to sit by the fire and smoke a pipe and drink a glass whilst I mend a stocking or two, you'll be company." This made opportunity for a chat, in which the matron related some particulars in the history of Watts's, notably connected with the visit of Charles Dickens, on which was founded his memorable Christmas story.

Unfortunately, the matron, a practical person, took a view of the incident remote from poetry or prose fiction. She engaged the services of a local solicitor, who wrote a letter to the manager of the *Daily News* threatening action for libel. His client's present prospects were, he wrote, blighted, her future blasted, by

the statement in a journal, avowedly of large circulation, that, the rest of the company having gone to bed, she sat up till all hours of the night mending stockings, a tramp within arm's length of her chair smoking a short pipe (I had not indicated its length) and drinking porter.

Robinson once confided to me the fact that his passion for travel was tamed by incurable apprehension of shipwreck. "I could never," he said, "sleep in my berth for thinking that between me and the bottom of the sea there was nothing but a plank of wood." There was one thing he apprehended with livelier fear even than a sea voyage. It was an action for libel. Quick on receipt of the communication from the Rochester solicitor, he wrote to the "ex-almost-a-genius" the most withering letter I ever received. By my callous indifference to facts, my audacious habit of romancing, I had, he said, not only permanently destroyed the character of the *Daily News*, but had immediately whelmed the proprietors in what promised to be colossal damages.

I learned later that, by putting a bold face on the matter, Robinson induced the local solicitor to accept £10 in full payment.

Another of Robinson's ferocities in letter-writing with which I was personally acquainted—I recall them since their rare reception made them memorable—was on account of my handwriting. He more than hinted that on particular occasions the time occupied in deciphering my copy had nearly led to that unpardonable sin, "losing the post" after the paper had gone to press. In normal times, he added, my infirmity involved exceptional expense as unduly prolonging the labour of the compositor.



I confess that my handwriting, in these days mercifully withheld from currency, is not as good as it might be. Admitting possibility of prejudice, I honestly aver that Robinson's was worse. It was still another bond of union between him and James Payn that in the matter of illegibility their handwriting was execrable. It happened that in the note addressed to me were three consecutive words, whose meaning I, after diligent endeavour, failed to decipher. I pasted a sheet of paper over Robinson's note, cutting a hole that disclosed these three words, and took it down with me to the office. Having humbly apologised for mine own weakness, and promising effort at amendment, I produced the shrouded note, and asked Robinson what the three words were. He glared at them through his glasses, turned them upside down, and finally admitted he could not tell. Removing the covering sheet I showed him how in the matter of caligraphy Satan might rebuke sin. He chuckled, added the story to his dinner list, embellishing it as time sped. He never again said anything about my handwriting; a conclusion more easily arrived at as, soon after, I formed the habit of dictation to a secretary.

Robinson was an excellent raconteur, long familiarity with a particular story abating nothing of the zest and keen enjoyment with which he told it. It was characteristic of a somewhat ludicrous tendency to secretiveness that he invariably prefaced his narration with the remark, "Now, look here, you mustn't print this." Not all were worth printing. But Robinson had a keen sense of humour, a quick eye for the ludicrous, and a certain measure of dramatic art, that made his stories delightful when they were not too long in the telling, and had not been repeated more than thrice.

Robinson made his way to one of the front places in British journalism by sheer capacity. He never had a patron, nor other turn of good luck, save what comes to the alert man ready to seize and make the most of opportunity. He began life, I believe, as an apprentice to a bookseller and printer in Essex. Having taught himself shorthand, he found a post as reporter on a Bedford journal, presently advancing to the dignity of sub-editor on a Wiltshire weekly. Thence he migrated to a similar position on the *Enquirer*, organ of the Unitarian community, which he joined as a boy. Work on the *Enquirer* was not sufficient to engage the full time of strenuous youth. He managed to obtain some connection with Douglas Jerrold's Weekly, and secured an appointment as London Letter writer for an American journal: a connection he maintained some time after he had been inducted into the managerial chair of the *Daily News*.

This portion of his public life is well known. In 1868, the *Daily News*, having passed an honourable but struggling life as a threepenny paper, came out at a penny. The new manager saw his opportunity when in 1870 war broke out between France and Germany. The newspapers had special correspondents before those days. The fame of W. H. Russell, a clear trumpet-note sounded through the muddled Crimean War, was still fresh in mind. But editors and the public had been content with the service of the post in conveying news and impressions. It is an odd thing that a constitutionally timid man should have hit upon the bold expedient of acquiring, with the aid of the telegraph, news hot with the breath of the battlefield. Robinson did that, and at a bound the *Daily News* sprang into the front rank of the world's



newspapers, a position it maintained for twenty years.

Of course he was fortunate in his agents, Archibald Forbes, MacGahan, and others. But these were men he picked out from the crowd, whose plan of campaign he directed as a commander-in-chief orders the movement of an army in the field. It was J. R. Robinson who made the *Daily News*. For twenty-seven years he and I worked together in intimacy ever growing closer, culminating in a period during which I was editor of the paper. Through all that time, in storm or sunshine, I found Robinson honourable in all his dealings, a willing slave to the call of duty, a heaven-born journalist, concealing behind a shy manner sometimes affecting austerity, a generous nature, a heart open to the widest sympathies.

It came to the knowledge of Wemyss Reid and Parkinson, in succession chairmen of the Reform, that I had bequeathed to the club my collection of portraits of eminent contemporaries. Thereafter, it was their genial humour to affect the keenest solicitude as to the state of my health. They gloomily congratulated me on looking well and going strong, but hinted that a man who had devised certain desirable property to his club, was expected not unduly to strain the privilege of longevity.

Alack! they have gone before, and I, I only am left of the merry company. As, seated apart, I look across at the table haunted by shadows—

I feel like one who treads alone

Some banquet hall deserted,

Whose lights are fled, whose garlands dead,

And all but he departed.

\* \* \* \* \*

Returning to England with the New Year 1904, after two months' absence in America, I was painfully struck by the number of public men, more or less intimate friends in social life, who in so brief an interval had passed away. To mention a few, there were John Penn, Blundell Maple in the House of Commons, and Lord Rowton in the Peers. Penn was little known to the general public, an omission amply covered by the personal affection with which he was regarded by those privileged to know him intimately. I confess I was drawn to him by an inspiration at second hand. Meeting him out once or twice, I discerned in him a quiet, rather dull man, who never said a foolish thing, because at the dinner-table he hardly ever opened his mouth except to eat. I further noted that he was a particular friend, a chosen companion, of Mr. Arthur Balfour, a person not likely to waste his friendship on an uninteresting person. In course of time, I, too, was admitted into the inner circle of John Penn's friends, and had opportunity of discovering the noble simplicity of his nature. At his own table, or in company with his particular friends, who included the brightest set of the House of Commons, he was light-hearted as a boy, given to hearty bursts of laughter. He rarely spoke in the House, and only on subjects upon which he was specially informed. His speech had the admirable qualities of brevity, lucidity, and mastery of his topic. Only a few years before his death he retired from the leadership of the great engineering firm which still bears his father's name.

The illness that carried him off was of recent growth, cruelly rapid development. A keen sportsman, an enthusiastic golfer, with just enough business on hand to ward off ennui, he was happy in his household,

honoured in public life. Suddenly, secretly, some malign finger touched his heart, transforming him into the wreck of a man. In the last week of July, 1903, he arranged a dinner-party for two old friends who were presently going across the Atlantic, and whom he knew he should not see again during the current year. His doctors forbade his being present at anything on the scale of his customary dinner-party. Penn yielded to authority, but dexterously evaded the spirit of the ukase. He was forbidden to have his usual dinner-party of sixteen. So he had two of eight, held in adjoining rooms, on which a door widely opened.

Among the merry half who sat at the host's table was the Prime Minister, showing no signs of the toil of a long session or the worry of Cabinet dissension. Penn ate and drank little, but his worn face lighted up at the brilliancy of Arthur Balfour's talk, and the old smile came back. The two friends for whom the dinner was arranged said "good-bye" and went their way. Among the wintry news reaching us by cable on the other side of the water was announcement of the death of John Penn.

On our return we heard a little story characteristic of his beautiful nature. He knew that the daughter of his opposite neighbour, in Carlton House Terrace, was about to be married. The day fixed was a Tuesday. On the previous Friday Penn felt that within probably twenty-four hours the shadow of death would have closed over him. His thoughts turned to the folk over the way, and the brightness in store for them. He accordingly gave instructions that in no circumstances was his funeral to take place on the wedding day.

So it was arranged, and he was buried the day after the ceremony.

Blundell Maple came into the House of Commons too late in life, was too busy elsewhere, at Tottenham Court Road and Newmarket, to make his mark. He happened to touch it in his last active session, when the great scandal of the army horse remounts in South Africa stirred the nation to depths of angry indignation. There were two diverse things of which Blundell Maple was supreme, unerring judge. One was an Eastern carpet, the other a horse. Had the duty of supplying remounts during the war been committed to him, many a lamentable episode in the long campaign would have turned out differently. Unasked, he devoted much valuable time to saving the country from loss and the army from peril in the matter of remounts. For guerdon he was snubbed by the sapient War Office authorities, and scolded by the committee appointed to enquire into their *laches*. In almost the last speech he made in the House he, in broken voice, described his treatment when summoned before the Remount Committee to give evidence. He fought long, quietly, but obstinately with prejudice against a tradesman, a prejudice most openly displayed by peers whose grandfathers had been mercers or their fathers brewers. He was lying on what proved to be his deathbed, when news reached him of his election to the Jockey Club, an honour for years withheld from a man who spent unlimited sums on the Turf, and always ran straight.

I made the acquaintance of Lord Rowton in the lobby of the House of Commons, which he frequented for more than thirty years. Even when Lord Beaconsfield was dead, and he himself was a peer, the old instincts of the Whip brought him back to his former hunting ground. Ostensibly he looked in for a pinch



of snuff, drawn from the box kept by the principal doorkeeper *pro bono publico*. Being there his quick eye took in the scene, he noted the persons present, and found opportunity to fill up half an hour by picking up opinions and odd bits of information. They were of no official use to him in later days. But it had been his business, whilst his chief was alive, and in his retirement he pursued it.

Thirty years ago there was nothing more pleasant in public life than the relations of Disraeli and Monty Corry. In a fashion, differing from that sung in immortal verse, the companionship was the realisation of Coleridge's dream that "Youth and Age are house-mates still." Lord Rowton's reverent affection for his old master remained warm to the last. In intimate conversation he rarely omitted to make some personal reference to him.

The last time I was in Lord Rowton's company was at Harrogate in the August of 1904. Hearing we were staying with a friend on The Stray, he called to leave a card. I had not met him since the spring, and was shocked at the change in his appearance. After a period of perennial youth, prolonged over his sixtieth year, he had suddenly finally broken down. He was suffering so acutely from lumbago that he regretfully protested it would be impossible for him to get out of his cab and walk up the steps. Prevailed upon by our host, he managed, with assistance, to enter the house and stay to luncheon. Quickly his spirits rose. He made light of recurrent twinges of pain, and talked with all his ancient vivacity. Inevitably his memory ran back to his old chief, about whom he freely spoke. Among other things, he related how Disraeli told him that the first communication he had with the lady who



subsequently became his wife, was dated from an inn bearing the extraordinary name "The Cow and Snuffers." Going down on electioneering business to the neighbourhood in which her husband lived, he had put up at this inn.

The luncheon lasted two hours, Lord Rowton contributing most of the conversation. As he left to return to his hotel he, by way of showing how completely he was recovered, did a step of the hornpipe in the hall. Then, linked arm in arm with unseen, unfelt Death, he got into his cab and passed away out of my life, and, within a few months, out of his own. The next I heard of him was by another of those cable messages announcing the death of old and treasured friends.

## XIX

### EPISODES

AMONG miscellaneous episodes in my journey through the Wilderness I have, as related in connection with Fred Burnaby, been up in a balloon. I have been down a coal mine in South Wales, and a silver mine at Leadville, U.S.A., this last a rare privilege in a jealously guarded place where, as an ordinarily inflexible rule, "no one is admitted except on business." I have voyaged in a submarine boat, and I have seen two men hanged.

One experience foregone sorely against my will was descent in a diving-bell. When, in January, 1873, the emigrant ship *Northfleet* sank off Dungeness, drowning 300 people, I described for the *Daily News* incidents consequent on the tragedy. A peculiarity of the shipwreck was the non-appearance on the surface of the waters of the bodies of the drowned. Usually, after a certain number of days, the sea gives up its dead. In the case of the *Northfleet* only a score or so of the drowned floated within a week of the wreck. It was conjectured that the great company were entombed in the hull. It was arranged that a diving-bell should go down to fathom the mystery.

I struck up a close friendship with Captain Oates, the original commander of the *Northfleet*, whose escape from the fateful ship was singular. He had made all

arrangements for sailing when he was served with a mandate ordering him to attend and give evidence in the Tichborne case, then approaching its climax. He had no option. To his profound regret, and considerable pecuniary loss, he remained ashore whilst the *Northfleet*, under a new commander, set forth with bellying sails to meet her doom at Dungeness.

I did not go down in the diving-bell, for the simple reason that the diving-bell never descended. A storm beat up Channel, churning the waters above the submerged wreck in a way that made impossible the operation of the diving-bell. It prevailed for more than a week, when the project was abandoned.

Captain Oates was one of the few men who saw and conversed with the real Roger Tichborne before his disappearance. In the course of a drive from Dover to Dungeness he gave me a vivid account of the incident, which I transcribe from my diary of that date. It throws a flood of light on the memorable story.

"I was at the time," he said, "in charge of the *John Bibby*, lying at Rio, waiting for a cargo. The *Bella* lay alongside, and, as her owners and mine were connected in business arrangements, Captain Birkett and I were often together, and used to talk our affairs over. One day, when he was ready to sail, he came to me and said, 'Oates, there is a young fellow been over to see me about taking a passage in the *Bella* to New York.'

"'Well,' I said, 'you have a berth, and may as well make a dollar or two for the ship.'

"'Xactly,' said he, 'but the fact is the young fellow has got no money; he says he is well connected, has plenty of rich friends in England, and that a letter of credit is waiting for him at New York. But he has

run through all his money here, is heavily in debt, and wants to get quietly away.'

"'Well,' I said, 'that's another sort of thing, Birkett,' I says. 'You know well enough what passage money to be paid at the other end usually comes to. However, bring the young fellow over to breakfast in the morning and we'll have a look at him.'

"So next morning Birkett and the young fellow came over to breakfast with me, and he told his story. It was impossible to be in his company five minutes without knowing that he was of gentleman stock, and after he was gone I said to Birkett, 'Let him have the passage. If he pays it will be all right, and if he don't it will be only another plate of sole on the table during the voyage, and the owners need not know anything about it.'

"Birkett took my word, and let the young fellow go aboard. The authorities at Rio were very strict at the time, and it was necessary for every one leaving the city to have a passport. Tichborne, owing money all about, could not, of course, get his passport, and we had to smuggle him aboard. He came off in a boat the night before, and when the custom-house officers hove within sight next day, for the last look round, we put him down in a hole in the cabin floor, underneath the table. The custom-house officers came aboard, mustered the crew, and found them all right.

"'Any one else aboard, Captain Birkett?' says one.

"'No,' says Birkett; 'but come down in the cabin and take a cup of coffee before you go.'

"The officer came down and sat at the table with his feet on the plank which covered young Tichborne.



When he had finished his coffee he and I put off. The *Bella* made sail, and I never saw or heard anything about the ship till a few days later a bit of stern and a portion of the poop floated ashore, and told us she had foundered.

"When this blackguard (the Claimant) was examined in private for the first time, five or six years ago, he knew nothing at all of this. He tried to get out of it by saying he was drunk when he went aboard, and remained in his cabin in a state of delirium tremens up to the time of the wreck, Tichborne being, as I well knew, as sober as I am this minute."

The trip in the submarine took place in the spring of 1905. We were staying at Admiralty House, Portsmouth, the guests of Admiral and Lady Douglas, he at the time Commander-in-Chief. One day it was proposed that we should inspect a submarine in practice at the mouth of the harbour. Walking through the Dockyard to the Admiral's launch, we passed an interesting spectacle. It was the hull of the submarine "A1," which, twelve months earlier, met with a fate that sent a thrill of horror and sympathy through the country. Practising under water off the *Nab* lightship in the Channel, she was literally run over by a mammoth ocean steamer homeward-bound. The liner's prow struck her conning-tower, sending her to the bottom of the sea with a crew of nine hands and two officers sealed up in a living tomb. Looking down at the dry dock where the wreck was dealt with we saw the rent in the frame-work caused by the impact of the great steamer. The Admiral casually mentioned that they were not



hurrying forward repairs. There would be no difficulty in obtaining a volunteer crew for the patched-up submarine, still retaining a name and identity made memorable by dire disaster. Nevertheless, it was just as well to let the passage of a year or two blunt the sharpness of memory.

Arrived at submarine "A2" waiting the signal for descent into the quiet sea, I asked the Admiral's permission to go down with her. He hesitated for a moment. But what was safe for sailors could not be perilous for a landsman. So he nodded assent, and in a few minutes I was snug on board. We had a pleasant, uneventful voyage. The hold, running the full length and breadth of the little craft, was brilliantly lighted by electricity. As in the case of "A1," there were a crew of nine men and two officers, young lieutenants, in command. During the voyage one stood on the steps of the ladder leading to the conning-tower. The other was in charge below. There was nothing unusual in the atmosphere, fresh air being supplied from chambers storing sufficient for twelve hours. Nor was there anything disturbing in the motion of the boat. As a matter of fact the landsman was not conscious of any movement when the boat sank out of sight of heaven and earth. Nor did he know he was speeding under water, confounding the cod, hampering the haddock and other sprinters of the deep by making the record pace of eight knots. The only feeling approaching uncanniness was born of the silence that prevailed, broken now and then by whispered command from the first lieutenant in the conning-tower, repeated by the second lieutenant below, and responded to by hoarse "Ay, ay" from the bluejacket lying full length on the floor in charge of

the particular piece of machinery that had to be adjusted.

The first hanging at which I was present was one of the last under the old barbarous system which brought a mob to the foot of the gallows, clamorous to see a fellow-creature done to death. The convict was a young farm labourer, who, after attending a Sunday afternoon service in the village church, lured into a wood a fellow-worshipper, a little girl eleven or twelve years old, and cruelly murdered her. In those good old times not only were executions public, affording early morning entertainment for Lord Tom Noddy and sightseers of lower degree, but representatives of the Press were admitted to sight of the awful mysteries of preparation for the gallows. Following close on the footsteps of the governor of the prison and the hangman, I was one of a group who stood by the doorway of the pinioning room, and saw the doomed man bound, not to say trussed. Across the waste of forty years I recall the predominant sensation—one of surprise at his stolidity, his uncomplaining acceptance of the operation as if it were an ordinary part of a morning's toilet. He assisted Calcraft to adjust the belt by removing his handkerchief from the breast pocket of his smock, across which it passed. An ox going to the shambles would have been more resentful.

The gallows were erected outside the county jail, which closely adjoins the railway station. For some hours passengers entering or leaving Shrewsbury by train, looking up at the prison walls, saw a dark object, some five feet ten inches in length, dangling from a rope, "the blue sky over him like God's great

pity." It was the mark of civilisation cut in the sixth decade of the nineteenth century.

Ten years later Henry Wainwright was hanged at Newgate, the execution being the last scene in what was known as the "Whitechapel Tragedy." He killed a girl of whose charms he had grown tired and whose affection for him had become boring. He was caught wheeling the body through the streets of London, with intent to hide it in the cellar of a house he rented near the Elephant and Castle. The proceedings at the foot of the gallows were much more seemly than those attendant on the execution at Shrewsbury. The gruesome ceremony was conducted within the privacy of the prison walls. But there were present in Chapel Yard at least a hundred spectators. About a score were, like myself, members of the Press attendant upon an undesirable duty assigned in the turn of a day's work. The rest were there by favour of the sheriffs, who had delegated to Calcraft the duty, incumbent upon themselves by ancient statute, of personally conducting the hanging.

In one corner of Chapel Yard stood a strongly built wooden shed, newly painted in honour of the day. It was gruesomely like a butcher's shop, windowless, with a skirting in front. An iron beam running its full length about a foot below the roof added to the structural similarity. From the beam hung, not a row of shoulders of mutton or sides of Christmas beef, but a few links of strong chain finished off by a hook. To the chain was knotted a stout hempen cord. It was looped, the noose thrown with a certain ghastly grace over the hook.

This was the sight that met Wainwright's eyes when, a door opening on the courtyard, he walked out

into the cool morning air. Bareheaded and pinioned, he bore himself bravely, even with a certain quiet dignity. By his side strode a warder leading the procession. On his left, slightly to the rear, with an air suggesting the hope that he did not intrude, came a little wizened man. This was Calcraft.

Many years afterwards the hangman called on me—I don't know why or wherefore—and, in my absence from home, left his card. In the circumstances I observed with relief notification that he had "retired from business."



## XX

### "IN JOURNEYINGS OFTEN"

ACCOMPANIED by Mrs. Lucy, an excellent traveller by sea or land, I have journeyed round the world, with shorter excursions to various points of the compass. Ever I was hampered by the exigencies of the Parliamentary session, whose arrangements not only arbitrarily determined the period of setting forth on a journey, but strictly limited the duration of the expedition.

The first time I crossed the Atlantic was in 1878, being commissioned by the *Daily News* to write a special account of the arrival and reception of the Princess Louise and the Marquis of Lorne, the latter appointed to the Viceroyalty. Here was opportunity of seeing Canada under favourable circumstances. Hardly had the Governor-General and the Princess landed at Halifax amid the roar of a royal salute and the acclamations of the populace, than I received a telegram from the *Daily News* manager ordering my instant return. War had broken out in Afghanistan. Parliament was hurriedly summoned in order to pass a vote of credit. If I took the first steamer I would get back in time for the opening day. No steamer was immediately sailing from Halifax. By travelling night and day through the snow-clad plains and forests of Canada we could catch a steamer outward-bound from



New York. This we did; but it was not a complete or satisfactory way of seeing Canada.

Five years later we set forth on our journey round the world, leaving Liverpool on September 3, 1883. Crossing the United States we took ship at San Francisco for Yokohama, coming back through India and the Suez Canal. The Parliamentary recess afforded only five months for this journey, a period one might have profitably spent in Japan or India. But it is wonderful what you can see and learn in five months if you keep eyes and ears open.

In crossing the American Continent we had the great pleasure of the frequent company of Lord and Lady Rosebery. They also were making a tour of the world, going by Australia. We did not voyage in company on the Atlantic, but met frequently at halting-places on the long railway route, and always dined together. At San Francisco, sleeping at the Palace Hotel, we also enjoyed an earthquake in common. It did not approach in vigour the one which twenty-four years later destroyed the hotel and partly uprooted San Francisco. But, like Mercutio's wound, it served. A large number of the guests fled into the streets. Lady Rosebery spent the night in the corridor, which, compared with her bed or her sitting-room, did not seem to afford greatly increased protection. I reflected that, being lodged on one of the topmost stories of the lofty building, it was a far journey to the street. If the earthquake really meant business one would be scarcely safer in the roadway between two rows of houses than on an upper floor. Accordingly, I turned over and went to sleep. When I awoke in the morning the guests were ringing for hot water as if nothing had happened since they went to bed.

It was a memorable season for subterranean excitement. Whilst we were on the Pacific, steaming eastward, some island in the Malay Archipelago disappeared in a volcanic eruption. For a period exceeding a month, partly when we were at sea, partly when travelling in jinrickshas through Japan, we nightly had the most glorious sunsets ever seen on sea or land.

At the time of our visit Japan was only beginning to emerge into the full light of Western civilisation. Railways were few, the navy was practically non-existent, the army an undisciplined mob. We chanced to be at Tokio on the Mikado's birthday (November 3, 1883), an event celebrated by a review of the troops in an open space adjoining the Foreign Office. The force consisted of some 8000 men, horse, foot, and artillery. The opening of the day was marked by auguries that did not forecast the military triumphs that astonished the world a quarter of a century later. The Mikado, driving down in his brougham, mounted a safe little bay pony with yellow reins, and, followed by his staff and the military *attachés* of the Foreign Ministers, slowly rode past the ranks standing stiffly at attention. His seat on horseback was peculiar. Holding a yellow rein in either hand, his elbows squared he sat well forward on the pony's neck after a fashion later made familiar at Epsom by an American jockey.

As soon as the march past commenced one of the Imperial Princes lost the epaulette from his left shoulder, and was nearly thrown from his horse as he frantically clutched at it. Halfway across the review ground the Minister of War's horse bolted, depositing its rider in the roadway, where he was picked up and

carried off to a place of safety. After the review the Mikado withdrew to his tent. Hearing there were present two English visitors, he graciously intimated his desire that they should be presented. At the time his Majesty, who lived to see Japan transformed from a third-rate Power to the position of conqueror of Russia, equal to the mightiest States, was in his thirty-first year. He cultivated to the fullest extent the attribute of impassivity. He had gone out of his way to pay attention to two strangers, but, as through an interpreter he addressed them, his face betrayed about as much expression as is habitual to a brick wall.

I was privileged to see a good deal of the two men who are actually the founders of the modern and marvellous Japanese Empire. Prince Ito, he was plain "Mr." in those days, occupied the post of Minister of the Interior. Inouyé was Foreign Minister. In many intimate conversations I had with the latter he told me the history of his life, which reaches beyond the bounds of fancy of the average romancist. He and Ito belonged to the Samurai class, the nobles of old Japan, privileged to carry and use the two-handled sword. Fifty years ago the youths, just past their twentieth year, were in the retinue and confidence of the Prince of Choisu. He was the last leader of the lost cause of old Japan. His name lives in history, inasmuch as, in defiance of the Tycoon, who was dallying with the foreigners, he closed the Straits of Shimonoseki against British ships threatening to fire on any that came within range of his guns. The youths remonstrated with their hot-headed chieftain, pointing out the futility of opposing force to Great Britain.

"The thing to do," they said, "is to beat England on her own ground. We must learn to build ships,

sail ships, and fight them in a fleet of our own. Then we shall be able to keep our coast inviolate."

They volunteered to go to England, spy out the land, master the secret of naval supremacy, bring it back to Japan, create a fleet, and then let boastful Western nations look to themselves.

In 1858, when this project was submitted, it seemed childish in its audacity. As we know, it has been literally realised. Under great difficulties, suffering much privation, the two young men made their way to London. They had not been there more than three months when they were convinced of the helplessness of the attitude their Prince had assumed towards the mighty Western islanders. Returning home, for lack of money working their way before the mast, they counselled the Prince to make terms with the British. But they were more truly representative of Japanese opinion when, eight months earlier, they secretly left their country in search of methods that would enable them to trample on the foreigner. Their old friends regarded them as traitors and sought to take their lives. Ito went into hiding. Inouyé, falling into the hands of the angered Samurai, was slashed with swords and left for dead by the roadside. To this day he bears on his face a memento of the terrible night.

In 1894 we visited Capetown, and were for three weeks the guests of Cecil Rhodes of whom something is written in a later chapter. On Christmas Eve, 1902, on the invitation of Sir Alfred Moloney, Governor of Trinidad, we set out on a voyage to the West Indies. Before settling down at Government House, Trinidad, we stayed a week with Sir Robert Llewelyn, Governor of the beautiful island of Grenada.



Just before we started we learned that Lady Moloney was ill, the Governor's return to the island being deferred for a week. My engagements being fixed, we were bound to travel by the steamer in which our berths were booked. Accordingly we arrived at Trinidad a week ahead of our host and hostess. It was blazing hot, and our hotel, again "the best," need not have shrunk from entering the list of rivalry with an old acquaintance at Capetown.

We heard much of the beauty of Grenada, a small island a day's voyage from Trinidad. Thither we repaired, to pass the week unexpectedly disengaged. Among the passengers on the pretty steamer sailing over sapphire seas was a tall, spare man who, as soon as we had put to sea, came up from his berth in a white linen jacket and a short pipe between his teeth. He seemed to know everybody on board, his friendly attitude and racy conversation being greeted with an approach to reverence that, regarded in connection with his jacket and his pipe, was a little puzzling. I sat next to him at luncheon, and the captain presented me to Dr. Hayes, the Bishop of Trinidad. I met him later at dinner at Government House, Trinidad, improving upon a delightful acquaintance. During a visit to London the following year he lunched with us at Ashley Gardens. A week or two later we were shocked to read of his sudden death as he was preparing for return to the diocese in which he was the most popular figure.

Within a few hours of our arrival in Grenada despair settled down upon us. As far as we could see it equalled its reputation as a beautiful island. The wooded land was fair to see, the bay beautiful. Every prospect pleased; only our quarters were vile. We



would have fled straightway, but the boat called only once a week, and there we were entombed for seven days in a condition of squalor and discomfort, with food uneatable. Weeping may endure for a night; joy cometh with the morning. Shortly after breakfast, whilst we were settled in our desolate room discussing the least disreputable form of suicide, a note was brought in. It was from the Governor of the island, who had seen our names in the list of passengers arriving the day before, begging us to make Government House our home during our stay. This was the more gracious as I had no personal acquaintance with Sir Robert Llewelyn and was known to him only by name. We spent a delightful week with the charming family at Government House, getting back to Trinidad in time to find a welcome at the larger Government House, which stands in the garden where Charles Kingsley sojourned when "At Last" his heart's desire was fulfilled and he beheld the West Indies.

Our third visit to the United States, paid in the winter of 1903, was planned in response to an invitation from Sir Thomas Lipton to be his guest on the *Erin* during the race for the America Cup. We had made some preparation for the voyage, when it chanced one afternoon in July I met Mr. Choate, the American Minister, at the house of Mr. White, Secretary to the Legation. He had heard of our intended journey, and strongly dissuaded us from going to New York in August, the month in which the race was to be run. His graphic picture of its horrors in the hot weather made such an impression that we resolved to forego Sir Thomas's hospitality and the pleasure of the boat race, deferring our visit by a couple of months. For this

we were ever grateful, since we not only had better weather, but were present through the interesting turmoil of a general election, and were at Washington on the opening day of the new Congress.

I have somewhere read or heard it said that the world-wide popularity of *Punch* is damped in the United States. It is explained that American humour so entirely differs from British taste that Americans do not appreciate *Punch*. I can testify that, if it be true Mr. *Punch* has no vogue in the United States, the reception accorded to one of the humblest of his young men is incomprehensible. Desiring a little quiet and rest before commencing our tour, we on arrival of the steamer went straight off from the wharf to Larchmont, to the country house of a friend some twenty miles distant from New York. We left no address behind, and looked forward to at least a few days' seclusion. We counted without the host of New York papers. All the Sunday journals had columns reporting interviews with "Toby M.P." and other innocent material for sensational articles.

On Sunday one of the news editors of the *New York Herald*, by some occult means, traced us to our hiding-place. New York was already in the throes of the election. The afternoon caller brought a courteous message from the editor to say that preliminaries of the election campaign would be in full force on the following evening, and he desired to place at my disposal a motor car and a member of his staff to show me round the city. This was exceedingly kind. I reflected with embarrassment that no leading London paper would pay a similar attention to an American journalist *en tour*. I gladly accepted the offer, was driven through the Bowery and other densely populated

quarters, observing with interest the animated scene. When my personal conductor brought me to the railway station to catch the last train for Larchmont, he remarked, quite incidentally, that perhaps I should be able to write a special signed article for the *Herald*, describing my experiences and impressions. Here was the little plot disclosed. This was the explanation of the marked attention and the well-appointed motor car. Not disposed to spoil sport, I wrote the article and promptly received a cheque in payment.

Among the questions showered upon me by the eleven reporters who awaited my arrival on the wharf, one demanded instant definition of the grounds of difference between English and American humour. Oddly enough, of a series of articles the *Herald* commissioned me to write, one was on this interesting but abstruse topic. Probably the question is put to every literary man landing on the American shore.

From Larchmont we went on a visit to Mr. Whitelaw Reid's country house, modestly named Ophir Farm. In the stateliness of its outward appearance it reminded one curiously of Windsor Castle. The interior presents realisation of absolute luxury controlled by good taste. When shown to my dressing-room I thought, from its proportions, furnishing, and general adornment, that I had strayed into one of the smaller drawing-rooms. I marvelled when some months later I heard that Mr. Whitelaw Reid had accepted the post of American Minister at the Court of St. James's, a position that involved his quitting this perfect home lodged in a woodland whose wildness cultured taste left almost untouched. Another charming visit we paid—indeed, there were two, for we were asked again—was to



Bourke Cockran's house on Long Island. Nothing could exceed the hospitality of the New Yorkers, it being extended in many cases by people I met casually at luncheon or dinner.

With the Chinese Minister I was the joint guest at one of the famous Lotus Club Saturday night dinners. As I knew a speech would be expected, and the occasion being one of exceptional distinction, I was at pains to write out some choice sentences. When speech-making began I observed that those who contributed to it not only did not read from manuscript, but had not a scrap of notes. When the Chinese Ambassador, immediately preceding my turn, talked at ease in excellent English I felt ashamed of the manuscript in my breast coat pocket. Called upon to respond to the toast of the evening, I talked for a few minutes. What I said did not provide anything approaching the elegance of the secreted literary extract. It was, I fancy, much better received than would have been the manuscript.

Another banquet given for me was spread at the Union Club, my host being Colonel Harvey of "Harper's." It was a small but interesting company. A neighbour on my right was W. D. Howells, a happy accident that gave opportunity for a friendship renewed and cemented when later he visited this country in search of material for one of his delightful books.

"KILLERY POINT,

"October 16, 1906.

"DEAR MR. LUCY,—It has been the greatest pleasure for my daughter and me to hear from you, and we recognise Mrs. Lucy's hand in your kindness. When my article reappears in book form I will send

the volume to you, hoping that the passage left out of the magazine through an editorial exigency will not seem too personal to your 'haddock and potatoes.' We remember nothing pleasanter in all our English experience than our lunch with you at Whitethorn, unless it was our lunch with you in London.

"We have been here by the sea ever since May, but we are going back to New York in a fortnight. We shall all be in a hotel till January, when my daughter goes to Bermuda, which she loves almost as much as England. Of course, England is bigger, but the climate is better in Bermuda. If England were only two days off, like the other island, we should all go, in spite of your winter, and we should certainly come as near to Hythe as Folkestone. Hythe is one of our homes, and when we are anywhere else we are in exile—partially at least.

"We are in the glory of our Fall weather, but it is sad glory, and I shall not be sorry to turn my back on the red leaves, though New York does not tempt me. This is a good place to work; but I think I have worked enough, and I only wish New York would play with me.

"My wife wishes to join my daughter and me in love to you both, who are so often in our minds and on our tongues. My daughter says to tell Mrs. Lucy that she has adopted her fashion of tying flowers into little bunches, as the only way to make them stand up together in a bowl.

"No, we never got your letter at Genoa, but we will forgive its loss if you will write us another from Hythe.

"Yours sincerely,

"W. D. HOWELLS."



A gentleman at the end of the table in the course of the dinner moving up till he sat in a chair next to me, insisted upon my bringing my wife to stay the week-end at his country house. We went and had a delightful time. On returning to New York we found awaiting us at the station his motor car, placed at our disposal for what remained of the day. I mention this as one of the instances of spontaneous and abounding hospitality of New Yorkers. Two ladies whom we had never met before our arrival took it in turns to send their carriage to take Mrs. Lucy a drive whenever she was at liberty. For myself I attempted, I confess ineffectually, to draw the line at suppers. We were left to breakfast at the Waldorf, our headquarters. Thereafter there were luncheons, teas, early dinners, the theatre or opera, with supper to follow, either at Sherry's or Delmonico's.

One night at the latter hostelry, pressed to partake of a quite unnecessary meal, I bethought me of a Welsh rarebit as combining the maximum of tastiness with the minimum of bulk. At the end of half an hour the waiter brought in with a flourish a covered dish, which he placed before me. I found on tasting it something resembling the upper leather of a tanned shoe passed through a meat mincer, flavoured with much mustard, and temporarily subjected to the influence of a red hot salamander passed over its surface. I suppose it was the first time in the history of this famous supper room that a Welsh rarebit had been asked for. But Delmonico was not to be done. The upper leather of an old shoe—tan being of course selected on account of its colour—was as nothing. So I had my Welsh rarebit. Thereafter I took what my host provided.

## XXI

### THEODORE ROOSEVELT AT THE WHITE HOUSE

LUNCHING with the Secretary of State and Mrs. John Hay in their charming corner house in Washington, there bustled into the room a plainly dressed man of average height, sturdy figure, and keen countenance. He was unannounced and unaccompanied. It was only when we were in casual manner introduced we learned that this was the President of the United States. The day was a Sunday in October, 1903. He had been to church and on his way home dropped in for a few minutes' chat with his colleague—the Statesman who did much to establish his personal position and the increased weight of the United States in the counsels of the Western world.

Mr. Roosevelt is the kind of man who would make himself at home, whether in the backwoods of the West, in the stately home the United States provides its President, or anywhere in the wide range that lies between these extremes. Healthy in mind and body, he is gifted with the cheery nature whose price is above rubies. His official position, in respect of personal power mightier than that of some crowned monarchs in Europe, brings him in contact with an endless procession of interesting people. If he were cast away in some remote clime—say on the boundary of Alaska, or midway across the Isthmus of Panama—

memory would endow him with the companionship of an innumerable caravan, including names the most familiar and famous in the world's history.

These he has come to know in his library. The President is an omnivorous reader. At one turn of conversation he is reminded of a passage in Homer, the next he is expatiating on the history of "Tittlebat Titmouse." Contemporaneously with the announcement of the rebellion in Panama, dexterously exploited by the President and his Secretary of State, John Hay, a personality as popular in London as in Washington, there was published in the States a new edition of the works of Samuel Warren. The time seemed to the President opportune for renewing his acquaintance with the works of the author of "Ten Thousand a Year," so whilst the Opposition papers fulminated denunciation of his Panama policy he read "Tittlebat Titmouse." As for Dickens, he knows him so intimately that he would have been a dangerous competitor in the contest initiated by Calverley in his famous examination paper on "Pickwick." If the President had failed, Senator Cabot Lodge, one of the guests at the little luncheon party the President gave for us, would certainly have won the prize. Any who talk of the decadence of Dickens should go to Washington and mix with the cultured men of business who direct the destinies of the United States. They would speedily discover their error.

How does the President, a man upon whose personal labour the sun never sets, find time for this miscellaneous reading? Well, all over the world it is the exceptionally busy man who has spare moments for desirable ends. The President shares a secret possessed by Mr. Gladstone, whom in his animated and varied

conversation, with its wide range and intimate acquaintance with any topic started, he strongly resembles.

"All my life," Mr. G. once said to me, "I have taken care of my ten minutes, certain that the hours and the days would take care of themselves."

A Ministerial colleague who accompanied the President on a recent trip westward told me of a habit that explains everything.

"We travelled day after day," he said, "the President addressing at successive stations crowds of country folk. It was a pretty hard day's work for the toughest of Rough Riders. For myself, though I hadn't to make speeches, I was thankful after the turmoil to turn into my berth for a snooze or a rest. As soon as the train moved off, out came the President's book, and he read away till, the train pulling up at another crowded station, a fresh speech was demanded, and delivered under the abiding sense of supreme Ministerial responsibility."

This practice the President observes wherever he is in residence.

"I read when I can," he says, "always a bit before I go to bed. Sometimes, at periods of great pressure, I awake about three in the morning. If I lay there thinking of things I should be worried to death, unfit for my work in the coming day. So I switch on the light, take up a book, read a chapter or two, fall asleep, and wake up bright and early."

White House is a charming residence, commanding a far-reaching view of tree-bowered Washington with the Potomac gleaming in the distance, and, beyond, the banks of Maryland—my Maryland. No military pomp attends the ruler of one of the greatest nations in the world. A solitary policeman yawned by the



front entrance as we approached. He did not think it his duty to inquire what authority the strangers had to mount the steps of the private residence of the President.

We chanced to be invited guests; that was mere accident. Any citizen in this free-born country has the right to cross the President's threshold and insist on shaking hands with him. Thus elsewhere on a memorable day came the murderer of President McKinley, with his treacherous right hand bound in sham bandage. Falling in with the crowd that filed past the beaming, welcoming President, he held out his left hand. As his victim took it in friendly grip, he, throwing off the bandage from his right hand, levelled a pistol and killed him.

For this and more ordinary reason President Roosevelt's colleagues in the Ministry urge him to discontinue the custom of wholesale handshaking. At one of his levées he consented to the innovation. The experience was unendurable.

"The very last time!" he called out to the attendant Ministers as the affronted crowd stood at gaze. "It is much more trouble to explain why I don't shake hands than it is to shake."

In his philosophical, cheery way the President makes the best of what is an intolerable nuisance.

"When I was a young man," he said, "I lived mostly out of doors, and enjoyed abundant exercise. Now I can't get much. But you go and stand in my place on an autumn afternoon and have your hand shaken by from three hundred to one thousand sturdy citizens, and if when it's over you don't feel as if you had been felling a tree or two you are made of harder grit than I."



President Roosevelt has inherited at the White House many valuable engravings and paintings, the latter including portraits of some famous predecessors in the chair.

"Come along, Toby," he said after luncheon, "come up to my study and I'll show you one of the most precious of my art treasures."

Hanging on the wall near his desk was Bernard Partridge's original drawing which appeared in *Punch* shortly after the Vice-President was suddenly called to assume the Presidency. "The Rough Rider" is its title, and it bears the inscription "With Mr. Punch's compliments to President Roosevelt."

"I had many complimentary messages at the time," said the President. "I don't remember any that gave me more pleasure than this greeting across the sea from an old friend I have known and studied nearly all my life."

## XXII

MARK TWAIN

ONE night in June, 1907, talk at the *Punch* dinner-table turned upon Mark Twain, who had been a recent guest. Linley Sambourne, in that reflective tone and manner that add interest to his reminiscences, remarked—

“The first time I met Mark Twain was at the last supper——”

A roar of feigned indignation greeted this apparent sacrilege. When it subsided Sammy, as he is affectionately known at the table, continued—

“—at the last supper given by Shirley Brooks in 1873.”

The first time *I* met Mark Twain in the flesh we were fellow-guests at the hospitable board of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, at that time still afar off from the Premiership. He sat next but one to the host, I being separated from him by the lady he had taken down to dinner. He was supremely dull, never once scintillating into a flash of humour. The next time was at the table in Tite Street of his fellow-countryman, E. A. Abbey, R.A. Then we saw and enjoyed the real Mark. Amongst the small but joyous company were Du Maurier of *Punch*, and Sargent, R.A., who had already taken the British public by storm with his wonderful pictures. Mark Twain sat immediately

opposite me at a table not too broad for easy conversation.

When the cigars went round, it turned upon journalism in its varied forms, more especially on the disproportionate profits accruing to proprietors of successful ventures, as compared with the salaries of the contributors who give the paper a start and keep it going. Either Mark or I—I forget which, the happy thought was more probably his—suggested an entirely new periodical. It was to be called *The Obituary*. Difficulties about division of profits were simplified by an arrangement that there were to be only two proprietors, Mark and I, that we were to be the sole staff, and were to equally share the revenues of the undertaking.

The broad but simple idea of the new paper was this. We were to fix upon a man in public life, preferably a wealthy person, and write, in the form of an obituary notice, a sketch of his career and a study of his character involving heinous charges, embodying an appreciation of his character calculated to make him turn in his freshly dug grave. The article being set up in type, was to be sent to the object of the kindly thought under cover of a letter, saying that unless we received down on the nail a sum ranging from £100 to £500, according to the estimated capacity of the purse of the subject of our memoir, the article would appear in *The Obituary* contemporaneously with the announcement of his death.

A year later I wrote Mark Twain informing him of a contemplated visit to the United States. He replied—

“QUARRY FARM, ELMIRA, NEW YORK.

“October 4th, '03.

“MY DEAR LUCY,—Your letter went to Hartford

and thereby lost a couple of days, arriving in this remote corner only to-day. Still, I may possibly be able to catch you with a word of welcome before you sail. But I can hardly hope for the good luck of seeing you, for we go on board our ship (bound for Italy) the evening of October 23rd, and your ship will come in next day, after we shall have sailed.

"I am sending to Hartford for that *Punch*, and will forward it to Helen Keller, whom you and Mrs. Lucy must see and know. She is well worth a journey. I shall speak to her publisher in New York, F. N. Doubleday, whom you must also know, and his partners and editors, Page and Lanier (brother of the late poet and scholar), all good fellows. And you must know Gilder (if you don't already) and Harvey and the others, and Howells.

"I have made a store of money out of our obituary scheme, and am escaping out of the country to avoid the embarrassment of accounting. But do not mind; you are good and God will take care of you.

"And we are leaving on another account. Mrs. Clemens has been a helpless victim of nervous prostration for fourteen months, and we hope a year in Italy will put her on her feet. The doctors believe it. We have secured a villa on the slope by Fiesole.

"Mrs. Clemens joins me in kind regards and warm welcome to you and Mrs. Lucy.

"Sincerely yours,

"S. L. CLEMENS."

The reference to *Punch* touches a notice I had written in its pages of a life of Helen Keller, a girl born deaf and dumb, trained by a clever governess to a condition that made her almost regardless of her



infirmities. I was invited to meet her when in New York, but was unfortunately engaged, and missed an opportunity much prized throughout the United States.

On the arrival of our ship at New York I found myself confronted by eleven representatives of as many newspapers, intent upon an interview. The most persistent and implacable was a lady. In the course of conversation they happened to mention that Mark Twain was that same morning sailing for Italy. I told them in brief the story of our projected joint literary enterprise. The effect was almost uncanny. Folding their notebook (so unlike the Arab), they stole away, making tracks for the gateway of the wharf giving on to the street, the lady reporter in the first flight. The following morning's paper explained the mystery. They had bolted off to the wharf whence Mark Twain's vessel would presently start, and got his version of the story. It appeared with some embellishments under many headlines. One paper started off with the announcement: "Lose One Humorist But Get Another; Mark Twain Sails for Italy. H. W. Lucy, Toby, M.P., Arrives Here." Another proclaimed: "Here's England's Funniest Man. H. W. Lucy, Champion Humorist, Arrives."

A year after Mark's return from Italy he wrote to me—

"MY DEAR LUCY,—The enclosed is a feeler flung forward in the interests of our *Obituary* as planned by us at Mr. Bryce's dinner that night.

"I mean to spend all the net profits stored up to now in advertising the letter. You see the little game? When attention is fixed on this *ballon d'essai* we will rip in with a prospectus of the *Obituary* Co.

(Lim.) offering ordinary shares to the public at a premium, keeping founders' shares for ourselves. See?

"Yours ever,

"MARK."

Mark is in error about the birthplace of the great project. The high-jinks were not played at the dinner-table of the author of "The Holy Roman Empire," but, as I have said, in the more congenial atmosphere of Tite Street.

This is the enclosure. It assumes to be addressed to the Editor of a newspaper.

*To the Editor.*

"SIR,—I am approaching seventy; it is in sight; it is only three years away. Necessarily, I must go soon. It is but a matter-of-course wisdom, then, that I should begin to set my worldly house in order now so that it may be done calmly and with thoroughness, in place of waiting until the last day, when, as we have often seen, the attempt to set both houses in order at the same time has been marred by the necessity for haste and by the confusion and waste of time arising from the inability of the notary and the ecclesiastic to work together harmoniously, taking turn about and giving each other friendly assistance—not perhaps in fielding, which could hardly be expected, but at least in the minor offices of keeping game and umpiring. By consequence, of which conflict of interest and absence of harmonious action, a draw has frequently resulted where this ill-fortune could not have happened if the houses had been set in order one at a time and hurry avoided by beginning in season, and giving to each the amount of time fairly and justly proper to it.

"In setting my earthly house in order I find it of moment that I should attend in person to one or two matters which men in my position have long had the habit of leaving wholly to others, with consequences often most regrettable. I wish to speak of only one of these matters at this time. Obituaries. Of necessity, an obituary is a thing which cannot be so judiciously edited by any hand as by that of the subject of it. In such a work it is not the facts that are of chief importance, but the light which the obituarist shall throw upon them, the meanings which he shall dress them in, the conclusions which he shall draw from them, and the judgments which he shall deliver upon them. The verdicts, you understand. That is the danger-line.

"In considering this matter, in view of my approaching change, it has seemed to me wise to take such measures as may be feasible, to acquire, by courtesy of the Press, access to my standing obituaries, with the privilege—if this is not asking too much—of editing, not their facts, but their verdicts. This, not for present profit, further than as concerns my family, but as a favourable influence usable on the other side, where there are some who are not friendly to me.

"With this explanation of my motives, I will now ask you of your courtesy to make an appeal for me to the public Press. It is my desire that such journals and periodicals as have obituaries of me lying in their pigeon holes, with a view to sudden use some day, will not wait longer, but will publish them now, and kindly send me a marked copy. My address is simply New York city. I have no other that is permanent and not transient.

"I will correct them—not the Facts but the Verdicts—striking out such clauses as could have a deleterious

influence on the Other Side, and replacing them with clauses of a more judicious character. I should, of course, expect to pay double rates for both the omissions and the substitutions; and I should also expect to pay quadruple rates for all obituaries which proved to be rightly and wisely worded in the originals, thus requiring no emendations at all.

"It is my desire to leave these Amended Obituaries neatly bound behind me as a perennial consolation and entertainment to my family, and as an heirloom which shall have a mournful but definite commercial value for my remote posterity.

"I beg, sir, that you will insert this Advertisement and send the bill to

"Yours very respectfully

"MARK TWAIN.

"P.S.—For the best Obituary—one suitable for me to read in public, and calculated to inspire regret—I desire to offer a prize, consisting of a portrait of me done entirely by myself in pen and ink without previous instruction. The ink warranted to be the kind used by the very best artists."

Mark Twain had a right royal time when he visited London in the season of 1907. From the King, who specially honoured him as a guest at the Windsor Garden party, down to the cabmen on the rank who recognised his striking face from his portrait, he was welcomed with a warmth extended to few literary men. The American Ambassador, Mr. Whitelaw Reid, gave at Dorchester House a banquet in his honour. The company included Lord Tennyson (President of the Royal Literary Fund), the P. R. A., the Poet Laureate,



Mr. Herkomer, Conan Doyle, Anthony Hope, Alma Tadema, and Edwin Abbey. It was naturally expected that the occasion would be marked by at least a couple of speeches, one proposing a toast to the guest of the evening, the other in response. When, cigars being lit and coffee served, the host rose from his chair, we all thought the moment had come. To every one's surprise, Mr. Reid gave the signal for moving into the next room.

Mark confessed to me that he shared the general surprise. He had in fact prepared the notes of a speech, carefully conveying the MS. in his breast coat pocket.

"But I'll make a good thing out of it," he said cheerily. "I'll cable it to New York and will get two hundred dollars for its exclusive publication."

Meeting him a day or two later, he told me he had carried out his plan, and was £50 to the good because he didn't make a speech.

Amidst a constant succession of honours paid him during his stay in London, he counted at highest value the bestowal upon him of an honorary degree by the Oxford University and the invitation to dine at the *Punch* table. This last was unique in its way, since the *Punch* dining-room is "tiled" more jealously than a Freemasons' meeting-room. Old traditions were preserved to the extent that the dinner was not one of the regular weekly symposia. But it was given in the dining-room, at the table on which are carved the names of the staff, going back to the days of Mark Lemon. The guest of the evening was not on this occasion let off without a speech. In mingled pathos and humour, it excelled his efforts elsewhere.

A little incident in the festival greatly charmed

him. When he was led into the dining-room, a cupboard door opened, and forth stepped a little fairy in the person of the daughter of Phil Agnew. She carried the original drawing by Bernard Partridge of a cartoon welcoming Mark Twain to London, which had appeared in *Punch* a fortnight earlier. It was presented to Mark as a memento of the occasion.

## XXIII

### PARLIAMENT AND THE PRESS

IN the year 1905 I was made a defendant in an action for libel brought against Mr. "Punch," with the result that he was cast in damages to the tune of £300, an incident rare, if not unique, in his long and honourable career. I mention the matter for the purpose of recording and explaining a movement that took place in the House of Commons as soon as the verdict was returned. There was an evident determination that I should not suffer pecuniarily. As the result of conversation in the Smoke Room, on the Terrace, and other resorts, Colonel Mark Lockwood, one of the most popular men in a succession of Parliaments, was asked to take the post of treasurer of an indemnity fund. He readily consented, but pointed out that the compliment would be more valuable if it were devoid of anything suggestive of politics. He was a prominent member of the Unionist Party. It would be well if a joint treasurer were appointed in the person of a member of the then Opposition. The point was readily conceded, and Mr. William Jones, a Welsh member of uncompromising Radical principles, was joined with the Colonel in the friendly undertaking.

The time was unpropitious. The month of August had been entered on, and after a laborious Session many members had left town on holidays more or less distant.

Nevertheless the movement promptly met with gratifying success. The original intention, set forth in the circular issued by the joint treasurers, was to invite only "Toby M.P.'s" personal friends in the House of Commons to subscribe. The matter was, however, quickly taken up in the House of Lords, many peers sending in subscriptions unsolicited. With the object of widening the area of sympathisers, subscriptions were limited to one guinea.

Of the scores of letters I received from members on both sides of the House I quote the subjoined from Sir Horace Plunkett, at the time Vice-President of the Irish Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction—

"KILDARE STREET CLUB, DUBLIN,

"August 12, 1905.

"MY DEAR LUCY,

"I have had my nose kept so constantly to the official grindstone here of late that the daily newspaper cuttings which my Private Secretary feeds me with have piled up on my desk. Hence I did not notice until quite late the fact that your friends had started a subscription to relieve you of some of the expense in which you have been involved by the kind of ill luck from which you of all men might reasonably have expected to be immune.

"I believe I am late for the movement of your friends, but will you allow me to contribute through you the enclosed cheque, which but for my dilatoriness I should have sent with greater pleasure to the Committee, as I should like to have been associated with them in their very agreeable tribute to your work and worth.



"I hope you are now getting down to your country home, where I send this letter with my kindest remembrances to the Rural Secretary, and best wishes for the future immunity of yourself from such extravagant ill luck.

"Yours sincerely,  
"HORACE PLUNKETT."

The personality of the subscribers added largely to the value of the generous testimony. In the first list of the joint treasurers, including one hundred names, were those of the Speaker (Mr. Lowther), the ex-Speaker (Viscount Selby), the Prime Minister (Mr. Arthur Balfour), the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Ritchie), the Colonial Secretary, the Minister of Agriculture, the Postmaster-General, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, the Secretary to the Local Government Board, the Solicitor-General for Ireland, the Solicitor-General for England, Mr. Asquith, K.C., Mr. Fletcher Moulton, K.C., Mr. Haldane, K.C., Mr. Robson, K.C., the Duke of Argyll, Mr. Chamberlain, the Marquis of Ripon, the Earl of Crewe, Viscount Ridley, Lord Rothschild, Lord James of Hereford, Lord Rathmore, Lord Burnham, Lord Denman, Sir Henry Fowler, Sir Edward Grey, Lord Monkswell, Mr. Bryce, Sir Arthur Hayter, Sir Charles Dilke, and Lord Hugh Cecil.

Such a demonstration, emanating from so wide, diversified, and distinguished a source, more than compensated for the worry and expense entailed by the law proceedings. It was the more valuable and gratifying since, whilst through the more than thirty years I had been daily and weekly discoursing about Parliamentary affairs, I had never concealed my opinion

about personalities, never been false to my political conviction, never modified expression of either save at the dictates of good taste.

In the affair I recognised a leading impulse in the respect and esteem with which my august master, Mr. "Punch," is regarded in Parliamentary circles. Any portion of the kindness that may have overflowed in my personal direction is hereby gratefully acknowledged.

In the preceding spring I received other evidence of the personal friendship of a large body of members of the House of Commons. Having retired from the post of Parliamentary Summary writer to the *Daily Telegraph*, assumed when, in 1900, the *Daily News* passed under new proprietorship, I found myself at the opening of the session of 1904 without the right of entrance to the Press Gallery. The rules which govern admission to that sanctum are as unintelligent as they are arbitrary. Half a century ago, when the English Press was something quite different from the institution of to-day, admission to the Gallery was limited to the London morning papers. Each had allotted to it two boxes, one for the leader and summary writer, the other for the reporting staff. The *Times* had, and to this day retains, three boxes. When, on the cheapening of the telegraph service, the country Press grew in power and in number, establishing London offices and engaging London staffs, pressure was brought to bear on the authorities of the House of Commons to provide accommodation in the Press Gallery. After long resistance this was conceded, by taking in a portion of the members' side galleries, sufficing for the construction of ten additional boxes.

This was an innovation calculated to make the typical Serjeant-at-Arms turn in his family grave.

Whilst the concession to modern development was grudgingly made there was rigidly preserved the old tradition that admission to the Press Gallery was obtainable only by men directly representing the papers on the official list. The last eight years have seen the birth and growth of the halfpenny morning paper. In some instances circulation, according to uncontradicted declaration, to-day far exceeds that of any of the older papers recognised in the Press Gallery. Yet I, representing one of these, having undertaken to contribute to the *Daily Express* a special article throughout the Session, found myself not only without a box in the Press Gallery but my name was struck off the Lobby List, at the head of which it stood by seniority. The halfpenny morning papers directly concerned have with cynical effect since put this matter right by buying up morning papers of old standing in London and the provinces, with the result that they now have something equal to one-half of the whole accommodation of the Press Gallery from which they were at the outset excluded.

Meanwhile, in order to perform my work in connection with quarters wide apart from the *Daily Express*, it was necessary that I should have access during the sittings both to the Press Gallery and the Lobby. I confess it seemed reasonable, as in the event it proved to be the opinion of a large section of the House of Commons, that the hard-and-fast rule might in my case have been varied, the freedom of the Press Gallery and the Lobby, enjoyed over thirty years, being confirmed on personal grounds. Assuming that the Gallery was provided as a means of securing information for the public of what went on at Westminster, it seemed absurd to put up the bars against one whose

daily and weekly circle of readers was probably equal to the aggregate of ten ordinary holders of Gallery tickets.

However, the existence of such a rule saves trouble to the constituted authorities. They entrench themselves behind it when occasion arises. Thus it befell that I was shut out from any part of the House, except that open to the ordinary stranger. On this becoming known I had within the space of a single week communications from between seventy and eighty members offering to ballot daily for places in the Strangers' Gallery, so that I might be assured of entrance. The Speaker, whilst pointing out that the jurisdiction of the Press Gallery rested not with him but with the Serjeant-at-Arms, gave instructions that whenever there was room below the Strangers' Gallery on the floor of the House I should be passed in by the door-keeper without the necessity of making formal application for admission.

This still left untouched the question of my exclusion from the Lobby, a serious impediment to performance of my daily work. Having failed in other quarters, I appealed to Mr. Arthur Balfour, then Prime Minister. He approached the Speaker, who at once decided to create a precedent, giving me access to the Lobby, not in accordance with the rule as representative of a particular paper, but in my own name.

In communicating the decision the Speaker graciously wrote: "I have been very glad to have been able to maintain the policy of the open door for you. To have closed the door would have caused an eclipse of the gaiety of Parliament; or, to speak more accurately, it would have shut out those little shafts of light with which you daily and weekly pierce our Cimmerian darkness."



## XXIV

### "MR. SPEAKER GOSCHEN"

EVERY one knows that at a critical moment in his career, and in the life of Lord Salisbury's second Administration, Lord Randolph Churchill "forgot Goschen." Less familiar to the public, in its detail here for the first time made known, is the fact that Mr. Goschen was almost nominated for the Chair of the House of Commons.

On the retirement of Mr. Speaker Brand in 1884 Mr. Gladstone pressed upon him the honour of the Speakership. A member of the 1880-5 Ministry told me of the circumstance, and gave me some particulars, to which allusion was made in notes "From Behind the Speaker's Chair," published in the *Strand Magazine*.

I was given to understand that Mr. Goschen, not unwilling to accept the Chair, was doubtful whether his physical shortsightedness would enable him to fulfil its duties. He could with difficulty recognise faces across the Table of the House. For members below the gangway to attempt to "catch his eye," even when it seemed to regard them with friendly interest from the Speaker's chair, would be hopeless. According to my information, an experiment was made, Mr. Goschen seating himself in the chair, and a number of his colleagues dispersing themselves on

seats on either side below the gangway. The result was that he definitely declined the proffered post.

With a view, as he subsequently told me, to having the facts of the case authoritatively recorded when a proper time presented itself, Mr. Goschen sent me the following written statement. It is dated from the Admiralty, August 17, 1896.

"I have just read your account of the circumstances under which I declined the Speakership. The story as you give it is not quite accurate. It is always difficult to collect the right facts even of comparatively recent history. The 'rehearsal' in the House of Commons did not take place. It was a letter from the great oculist, Bowman, which confirmed the doubts which I had expressed to Mr. Gladstone from the very first as to my physical capacity for the post, which settled the matter negatively.

"It was very characteristic of Mr. Gladstone that he sent himself for Mr. Bowman whom I had consulted as to my sight, and by his powers of persuasion obtained a favourable verdict from the specialist. But when the latter got home, he repented of his assent and wrote a letter to Mr. Gladstone pointing out the difficulties under which I might labour when the House was in a state of excitement and a rapid glance was essential. Mr. G. was annoyed, and thought Mr. Bowman had gone beyond the points on which he had been specially consulted, and wrote me that he had not altered his own opinion as to my fitness, but that I was now at liberty to claim my freedom.

"I at once stated that I could not, after such a

letter, undertake the post; and, to tell you the truth, I felt a great sense of relief, not disappointment—for I had been half-hearted about the matter from the first. I had, however, refused two great posts which Mr. G. had kindly offered me, and I was persuaded into accepting this third offer.

"I mention these points to you, as I think Mr. Gladstone's action, illustrating his great force of will, may not be uninteresting to you.

"Believe me, yours very faithfully,

"GEORGE J. GOSCHEN."

It is quite possible that, apart from consideration of Mr. Goschen's special qualifications for the lofty position in question, the simple-minded Premier may have perceived an opportunity of permanently removing from the arena of active politics a dangerous combatant. He early recognised Mr. Goschen's ability, recruiting him to his Government of 1868 in Cabinet position. In 1880, when a flood of Liberal enthusiasm reinstated Mr. Gladstone in power, he had gone so far along the Liberal track that Mr. Goschen was unable to accept office in a Ministry which, among other things, were pledged to assimilate the county and borough franchise. The Premier showed his esteem by nominating Mr. Goschen, who still sat on the Liberal benches, to the post of Ambassador Extraordinary to Constantinople. His mission accomplished, he wrote to his old colleague, "principally for the purpose of offering you my hearty congratulations on the place you have taken in diplomacy by force of mind and character, and of the services which, in thus far serving the most honourable aims a man can have, you have rendered to liberty and humanity." This was a letter

Mr. Goschen treasured long after he had finally broken with his old leader.

All the same, if Mr. Goschen could be comfortably settled in the Chair, possible embarrassment in the dim and distant future would be avoided.

As his letter to me sets forth, the Speakership was not to be for him. Whether Mr. Gladstone had or had not any "*arrière pensée*" in so eagerly urging him to take the Chair, is a secret locked up in the tomb at Westminster Abbey. But the prevision suggested was justified to the fullest extent. Mr. Goschen, remaining a private Member, went over to the Conservative side, and became a chief prop of Lord Salisbury's Government. Had he at the close of the Session of 1886 been throned in the Speaker's Chair, the course of events controlling the Government and affecting national affairs would have been widely different.

Except in one detail, Lord Randolph Churchill was doubtless correct in his calculation that he was indispensable to the Administration, in the aggregate personally weak, he had done much to place in power. But for that one thing Lord Salisbury would have been obliged to capitulate to his headstrong young colleague, who would have gone back to the Cabinet firmly rooted in even more autocratic habits than he had displayed to the terror of Mr. W. H. Smith and Viscount Cross. He "forgot Goschen," and that statesman, chancing to be free from the trammels of the Chair, was able to accept the vacant Chancellorship of the Exchequer, leaving Lord Randolph for ever out in the cold.

In 1895 Mr. Goschen returned to his post at the Admiralty, to which he had been inducted by Mr. Gladstone twenty-four years earlier. He held it till, in 1900, his services to the Unionist party were rewarded



by a viscountcy, which seemed to bring to a term his long and brilliant career in the fighting ranks of British statesmen. Among several interesting letters from him, I find one dated from Seacox Heath, Hawkhurst, October 6, 1900—

DEAR MR. LUCY,—*Punch* of last Wednesday was a great pleasure to me and mine. And I was all the more pleased because Mr. Sambourne's picture was a real pendant to one which I highly prize—Tenniel's picture of me at the time when I was appointed to the Admiralty in 1871. 'Captain Punch' then welcomed me with the words (as I was holding on to the steering-wheel of a ship), 'Hold on, Mr. Goschen, hold on, Sir. You'll be all right when you've got your sea legs.'

"And now Mr. Punch bids me good-bye in equally genial fashion.

"I liked the motto assigned to me very much: 'Short-sighted for himself; far-sighted for the nation,' and am grateful to its inventor.—Thanking you for your pleasant note, I am, yours very truly,

"GEORGE J. GOSCHEN."

In spite of physical defects in the matter of near-sightedness, and a certain ungainly manner when posing himself for a speech, Mr. Goschen was one of the great Parliamentary leaders who were equally effective on the public platform and in the House of Commons. In the course of his career he had wide experience of platform speaking, the excitement of which he much enjoyed. Talking one night at the dinner-table (where he always shone) about the varying quality of public audiences, he said: "Broadly speaking, the further north the political orator travels the better—I mean

the more inspiring—will he find his audience. Going into particulars, I should say that in this aspect London is the worst of all. The best audiences are Scotch. In my personal experience, the pick of them is found at Glasgow. Newcastle-on-Tyne is excellent; Liverpool second-rate; Birmingham so-so."

The judgment is the more striking since while London was accustomed to find a safe seat for him, Edinburgh sent him to the rightabout.

## XXV

### A LECTURING TOUR

IN 1897 the Directors of the Crystal Palace, desiring to pay a tribute to Queen Victoria on the sixtieth anniversary of her coming to the Throne, projected a series of lectures upon various features of her long reign, to be delivered by experts in the concert room. At the instance of Sir Arthur Otway, sometime Chairman of Ways and Means in the House of Commons, I was selected to treat the subject of the Parliaments of the Victorian era. I could not plead that I was "unacquainted with public speaking," having suffered it through many Sessions. But I had never appeared on a public platform and did not recognise in myself aptitude for the position. Sir Arthur Otway was encouraging and insistent, and I yielded.

Instinctively feeling that the insufficiency of the lecturer demanded exceptional attraction in the person of the chairman, I wrote to Sir William Harcourt, asking him to preside. He replied—

"7, RICHMOND TERRACE, WHITEHALL,  
"January 22, 1897.

"DEAR LUCY,—My real desire to do what you wish makes me, *multum reluctante*, consent to your proposal, though I practise an inexorable veto against public

functions of all kinds outside the House of Commons during the Session, and am obliged to accommodate the burden to aged limbs. As regards public ceremonies and speeches I feel, as in the case of war, if they must come sooner or later, better later, and if we are to throw stones in a glass house I think May more propitious than March. Therefore if I should happen to be alive I will do my possible to sit—not stand—by you on May 12.

“Yours sincerely,

“W. V. HARCOURT.”

On the approach of the, to me, eventful day reports appeared in the newspapers notifying that Sir William was confined to his room by illness. These were confirmed by receipt of the following letter :—

“MY DEAR LUCY,—You are aware that an influence over which I have no control has disabled me from all the offices of public duty and personal enjoyment. It is a real disappointment to me to find myself deprived of the opportunity of assisting in the character of one of the oldest inhabitants at your lecture on the House of Commons. I feel sure it will be a most interesting and instructive reading in comparative anatomy by an experienced physiologist, who is well acquainted with the body politic it will be his business to dissect. We who are your subjects recognise in your kindly hand the art of a skilful surgeon who knows how to operate on his patients under anæsthetics without pain. A critic without malice and a reviewer without prejudice is a character on which the House of Commons may congratulate itself, and by whom it may profit. Humour, above all good humour, is the salt of life, and you have



set the example in applying to politics this excellent antiseptic.

"Yours very sincerely,

"W. V. HARCOURT."

Only a few days were left for me to seek another chairman. Mr. G. W. E. Russell, an old Parliamentary hand whose premature withdrawal from the arena of the House of Commons has been to its distinct disadvantage, kindly stepped into the breach. I was more sorry for him than for myself at the result of the enterprise. The hall, which may be well enough as a concert room, is a gloomy sepulchre of ordered speech. It was not more than half full, and, as those on the back seats could only partly hear, there was no approach to enthusiasm. We got along somehow. George Russell made a cheery speech. As for me, having among few natural gifts endowment of something of the mental habit of Mark Tapley in adverse circumstances, I betrayed no discomfiture. Perhaps I was buoyed up by reflection on the fact (a consolation not shared by my chairman) that, in addition to the fee paid by the Crystal Palace Directors, the editor of the *North American Review* had offered me £50 for the manuscript of the lecture, which was published in two successive numbers of his magazine.

Amongst the audience, unknown to me, was a gentleman whose presence had important influence on subsequent events. He was the manager of the leading London Lecture Agency, and was so far favourably impressed with the discourse that he asked me to permit him to obtain for me engagements to deliver it in various parts of the country. As the lecture season falls during the Parliamentary Recess, I, under the

impression that the enterprise would involve some six or eight excursions, left the matter in his hands. Before the season opened he had booked over forty engagements in London and the provinces, a considerable number of invitations coming from Scotland.

It was pretty hard work, there being rarely a day's intermission from a railway journey with a lecture at night. The tour actually took the form of a series of visits to the town and country houses of friends. I do not think that through the long course of travel I more than three times put up at an hotel. There was perhaps a tendency to kill one with kindness. Invariably my host made the visit occasion for a banquet, to which he bade a considerable number of guests. This was not the best preparation for delivery of a lecture of upwards of an hour's duration. It was kindly meant and was certainly pleasant.

My difficulty was to fit in the invitations showered on me by the kindness of friends. One I particularly regretted having to decline is conveyed in the following note:—

“BELMONT CASTLE, MEIGLE, SCOTLAND,

“November 16.

“MY DEAR LUCY,—Only to-day have I seen in the local papers that you are going to lecture in Dundee on Friday. You will therefore be within three-quarters of an hour of us; and what you are to do is to come here on Saturday morning and stay. Why should you not stay over the Harcourt festival next week? He is coming here on Monday night, and reposes here until the anvil is ready on which his hammer will fall on Thursday, to the confusion of all timid people and the delight of all who love a row. You are not wanted

anywhere else at this time of year. Judging by the contents of the papers, they might as well be written anywhere as in London. Why not do your 'Pall Mall' gossip from here? You may become even a 'mere outsider,' and copying his fashion predict on Monday what you will announce on Friday as having happened on Thursday.

"If you are wise and bring Mrs. Lucy with you, underline all I have said, for everything would be doubled, from our pleasure downwards. And she might come here on Friday, in anticipation of you; for I am sure she can forego the pleasure of listening to your thunder on Friday. Do come.

"Yours always,

"H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN."

Lord Rosebery, ever hospitable, telegraphed asking me to stay at Dalmeny during the visit to Edinburgh. I was already pledged to be the guest of Lord Robertson, then Lord Justice General of Scotland, who, breaking through a habit long enforced by official duties, consented to appear on a public platform in Edinburgh, presiding at the lecture delivered under the auspices of the Philosophical Institution. Later, lecturing at Epsom, Lord Rosebery sacrificed his dinner hour at the Durdans in order to take the chair, when he delivered a sparkling speech on the Houses of Parliament. Under such ægis the faults of the lecture and the demerits of its delivery were overlooked. The tour proved an unexpected success.

Lord Robertson, who has permanently crossed the Tweed to take his place in the House of Lords, where he ranks as Lord of Appeal, has the distinction of first bewildering, then delighting that august assembly.

He too infrequently takes part in debate. When he rises he commands an audience which pays him the compliment of steadily increasing numbers.

Speaking in the first portion of last Session on a Government Bill involving (I think) the compulsory purchase of Scottish land, he asked the House to suppose that an analogous measure had been brought in affecting a London suburb.

"There might," he continued, "be expected to come forward a householder who said, 'I am, although perhaps it is not I who should say it, a model of all civic virtues. And yet my villa is going to be taken from me.' In amplification of his claim to be a person of the highest virtues he might go on to say, 'I am a member of the National Liberal Club, a teetotaler, and a passive resister. I have recently married my deceased wife's sister, and none of my children have been vaccinated.'"

Noble lords dozing on back benches, and others entering at the moment when Lord Robertson with artfully raised voice and emphatic manner declaimed these accumulative peculiarities of a pragmatistical Radical, for a moment thought that here was public confession of infirmity openly made, a sort of breaking of "The Silence of Dean Maitland." The apprehension was only momentary, and was followed by an explosion of mirth whose hilarity was unfamiliar in the staid circle.\*

\* Since this was written Lord Robertson's sudden death at Cap Martin, from heart disease, has shocked and pained his multitudinous friends.



## XXVI

### MR. CHAMBERLAIN

THE popular idea of Mr. Chamberlain, founded exclusively on observation of his public career, is that he is a man of hard nature, implacable of purpose, remorseless in rolling over any who get in his way. Within limits this appreciation is defensible. In public life, striving for what he believes to be the welfare of the empire, he is undoubtedly disposed to march straight forward regardless of personalities, even though they be old familiar friends.

There is another side of his character, out of range of the public eye. In the private relations of life, the inflexible political fighter is the most lovable, most loved of men. A brilliant conversationalist, endowed with a keen sense of humour, he is the life and soul of the company in which he chances to find himself. The loyalty he creates in the minds of those nearest to him is happily indicated in the subjoined letter from his son Austen, addressed to me under date December 2, 1901—

“I admit I have sometimes thought on reading your lines hot (or I should say ‘wet’) from the press that you lent some countenance to the stories that my father was actuated by personal ambitions or personal antipathies of a mean and petty nature which I *know*

have never entered his head. I am glad to think that I may have been wrong, and that reading again what you had written I might find after the lapse of a little time that I was hypersensitive or that I altogether misunderstood you.

"You must remember that you write in many places—sometimes as a frank advocate of one side in a party, but sometimes also as an impartial observer in non-party journals. In the former character we expect you to fight for your side. In the latter we ask of you that very hard thing—the impartiality of a historian in telling of events and scenes all the excitement of which you have shared almost at the moment at which you are writing. It is, therefore, a high standard by which I have criticised.

"My father may be right or wrong, but I think those who have known him as you have done will never deny his intense seriousness, or his utter disregard of his own personal convenience or advantage when thinking of what he owes to his colleagues or his country.

"If he had been less loyal to colleagues with whose views and policy he was not always in sympathy in 1880–5, his critics of to-day would find fewer quotations from his old speeches to hurl at him."

The suggestion underlying this letter—that in publicly discussing Mr. Chamberlain's action I have been animated by feelings of personal animosity—arises solely from the jealousy of extreme filial affection. Our acquaintance goes back over thirty-four years, and I have never varied from the attitude of personal esteem for the man, admiration for unrivalled intellectual power. It is true my references to him in his public

capacity have been free from taint of obsequiousness. But Mr. Chamberlain himself is a hard hitter, and knows that when a man plays at bowls he must expect rubbers.

A redoubtable foe, he is a friend whose loyalty knows no bounds. I find in my diary an entry, dated April 29, 1900, which supplies two instances, widely varying in scope, of this trait in his character. I transcribe it as it was written—

“Met Chamberlain last night at Robson Roose’s. Sat next to him at dinner. He talked to me the whole of the time with marvellous frankness. Told me he had that morning been reading a magazine article of mine, simultaneously published in New York and London, discussing his chances of succession to the Premiership. He is very impatient of frank criticism. Evidently did not like the article, but the only complaint he made was of what he called ‘a sneer’ at Jesse Collings and Powell Williams as Members of the Ministry. He defended them loyally, insisting that P. W. had done great service at the War Office, saving the country thousands of pounds, ‘for which,’ he bitterly added, ‘they’ (meaning the War Office people) ‘are now shunting him.’”

Of the theme of the article he spoke freely.

“‘If,’ he said, ‘you want to know the truth about the matter I will tell you. Never at any time in any circumstances do I intend to be Prime Minister of the Unionist party. I am ready to serve under Arthur Balfour or any one else who may be preferred to the post. I confess it was different when I was on the other side. Fifteen years ago I was certainly resolved

to be Prime Minister in the Liberal succession. If I had been, you would have seen established that condition of Liberal Imperialism of which Rosebery and others futilely talk to-day.'"

He warmly defended himself against the accusation of being a recent convert to Imperialism.

"‘Why,’ he said, ‘when I was in the Cabinet of 1880, I was then, more especially in respect to Egypt, accused by my colleagues of being a Jingo. In respect of England’s Imperial position I have never been anything but what I am to-day.’"

Some time later he told me a curious story vindicating his consistency in the matter of Imperialism. In 1857, John Bright, unseated at Manchester, offered himself for election at Birmingham. Mr. Chamberlain, then in his twenty-first year, was already taking an active part in politics. The great Free Trader, the ultra-Radical, was in every respect save one his ideal of a party leader. But he had voted against Lord Palmerston on the question of the Chinese War. Mr. Chamberlain was enthusiastically in favour of the attitude assumed by Palmerston at this crisis, and did his best to keep Bright out of Birmingham.

In due course his fealty to Mr. Arthur Balfour was triumphantly demonstrated. When on the death of the Marquis of Salisbury a meeting of the Unionist party was summoned for the election of a successor, Mr. Chamberlain happened to be confined to his room by illness. It was unworthily said by partisan commentators that advantage was taken of his being *hors de combat* to rush the matter through. The conversation quoted, taking place two years earlier, testified to



the sincerity of the letter written by Mr. Chamberlain from his sick-room, in which he heartily applauded the nomination of Mr. Balfour.

On the day after the Roose dinner I wrote to him with reference to his remarks about a disposition on my part to chaff (I am sure not unkindly) his two old Birmingham friends. He replied—

“40, PRINCE’S GARDENS, S.W.,  
“April 30, 1900.

“MY DEAR LUCY,—Many thanks for your note, which is—and this is the highest praise I can give to it—what I expected from your love of justice and fair play.

“I am very glad that I had the opportunity of a talk with you, and I am sure that you will not regret in the future avoiding a topic which to my knowledge—although no doubt unintentionally as far as you are concerned—has given pain to very worthy men.

“I have written for a copy of the new University scheme, which I shall be glad to send you and which I think will interest you.

“Believe me,

“Yours very truly,

“J. CHAMBERLAIN.”

Before Mr. Chamberlain married the lady whose sunny influence has lightened the deep shadow that swooped down upon him at a time when still in the prime of physical and intellectual power, Mr. Jesse Collings was a constant companion on his Continental trips. A pretty story had vogue about a passage from Gibraltar to Tangier. There being no regular steamer available, the two Easter-tide tourists engaged a passage

in a sloop about to cross over. Here, again, difficulty presented itself. There was only one sleeping cabin available, and that was the captain's. For a consideration he was ready to lease his holding; but the bunk would hold only one sleeper. In this dilemma he approached Mr. Chamberlain with the remark—

"It's all right, young man. I'll make your father up comfortable in my bunk, and you shall lie on the floor."

Towards the close of the Session of 1901, Lord Salisbury's Government brought in a Bill authorising alteration of the Royal title. It was proposed to hail his Majesty "Edward the Seventh, by the Grace of God of Great Britain and Ireland and of all the British Dominions beyond the Seas, King, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India." General objection was taken to the clumsiness of this designation. In debate in the House of Lords, the Earl of Rosebery proposed to substitute the phrase "King of Britains beyond the Sea."

In the "Diary of Toby, M.P.," published in *Punch*, citation was made of a passage from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which relates how on the eve of the battle that delivered Wessex from the dominion of the Dane, St. Cuthbert visited King Alfred in his sleep and hailed him "King of all Britain."

"What better, more precise, equally comprehensive title," Toby, M.P. asked, "could be adopted by the twentieth-century King descended in unbroken line from Alfred? The title would run, 'Edward the Seventh, by the Grace of God King of All Britain and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, Emperor of India.'"

His Majesty, at the time on a visit to Homburg, graciously took note of the suggestion. To Mr.

Chamberlain, in charge of the Bill in the Commons, I suggested that at least the redundant "of all" before "the British Dominions" might be deleted. He replied—

"40, PRINCE'S GARDEN, S.W.,

"Aug. 6, 1901.

"DEAR MR. LUCY,—If business in the House of Commons were conducted on the old lines I should like to take advantage of some of the suggestions made with regard to the King's title, and thereby get rid of the unnecessary words 'of all' objected to by you. But just now, with the Irish inclined to make a Donnybrook Fair of everything, it seems unwise to agree to any alteration. Lord Rosebery's certainly would not please such colonies as Canada and Mauritius, nor would the Dutch like it in South Africa.

"Believe me,

"Yours very truly,

"J. CHAMBERLAIN."

Mr. Chamberlain's instinct for controlling electoral campaigns, his sure divination of the result of a pending conflict, were demonstrated during his connection with the Birmingham caucus and after. It was no secret that he was in favour of appealing to the country immediately upon the conclusion of the South African War. Talking with me on the subject at the end of the Session of 1902, he, having thoroughly gone into the matter, expressed the confident opinion that as a result of a General Election taken at that time, the Unionist party would be reinstated with a majority at least equal to that secured in the autumn of 1900.

Mr. Balfour lingered on for three years, when the

Liberals came into power with one of the biggest majorities recorded in history.

Having completed the "Diary of the Unionist Parliament" it occurred to me that in a series of dedications of successive volumes inscribed in turn to Lord Rosebery, Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Balfour, it was appropriate that Mr. Chamberlain's name should be associated with this particular record. In reply to a request for permission, he wrote—

"Highbury, Moor Green,

"BIRMINGHAM, Dec. 19, 1900.

"DEAR MR. LUCY,—I have made a rule to decline all dedications; but every rule must have an exception, and I think our long acquaintance justifies one in your case. Therefore if you desire it I shall accept the compliment with pleasure.

"My wife and I thank you for your good wishes, which we heartily reciprocate.

"Yours very truly,

"J. CHAMBERLAIN."

The volume accordingly bears the legend: "To the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, M.P., who made possible the Unionist Parliament 1895-1900, this record of some phases of its history is inscribed."

It was at the time little known, and is now perhaps forgotten, that twelve years before Mr. Chamberlain, accompanied by the hearty good wishes of the nation, set forth in the cruiser *Good Hope* on the mission of tranquillising South Africa at the close of the Boer War, he very nearly started on the same voyage under quite different auspices. In the spring of 1889 a vacancy occurred in the Governorship of the



Cape. Mr. Chamberlain, at that time acting in concert with Lord Hartington and Sir Henry James, whilst an uncompromising supporter of the Government, held no office. It occurred to Lord Salisbury that, possibly for more reasons than appeared on the face of the suggestion, he would be the very man for the colony. It would not be accurate to say that the Governorship was actually offered and declined. Certainly Mr. Chamberlain was made aware that the opportunity of undertaking the government of Cape Colony was at his disposal.

Having always taken keen interest in the development of South Africa, he was, I believe, not indisposed to accept the position. But the prospect of temporary banishment from London at a critical stage of political history was not alluring, and the project was nipped in the bud.

It is interesting to speculate on what might have happened had he taken up his residence for five years at Capetown within measurable distance of Paul Kruger. It is not improbable that necessity for the war would never have arisen, or that if the hand of the British Government had been forced, they would not have entered on the conflict in the blindfolded, unprepared condition that courted, and for the opening year of the campaign realised, disaster.

The reference to Mr. Gladstone, taken in conjunction with the date, lends peculiar interest to the subjoined letter.

"40, PRINCE'S GARDENS, S.W.,

"March 16, 1887.

"DEAR MR. LUCY,—Many thanks for your letter and its enclosures. I could send you scores written from

the opposite standpoint. I received five by the post this morning, all enthusiastic about my speech and promising support to the three-cornered plan. Believe me this plan will be deadly if we are forced to try it. The last time it was employed was just before the collapse of the Gladstone Administration in connection with its education policy. The National Education League ran five candidates in five successive bye-elections. I hope, however, that we may yet avoid extremities.

"I dined last night with Mr. Gladstone at Sir Charles Forster's, and found him most pleasant. I cannot believe that he is averse to an honourable settlement.

"Yours truly,

"J. CHAMBERLAIN."

The almost eager grasping at a settlement, the pleased reference to Mr. Gladstone's bearing towards him, go to confirm a conviction I have from the first held as to the genesis of the step which transfigured Mr. Chamberlain's political character. I believe that, keen as was his look ahead, when he in company with Mr. George Trevelyan quitted Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet in 1886, he never dreamt whither the step would lead him. He drifted into a position which in course of time led him to serve in a Cabinet that had Lord Salisbury for its head, Mr. Arthur Balfour for its right hand.

In Lord Morley's "Life of Gladstone" there is a reference to the Cabinet meeting held on March 26, 1886, the last at which Mr. Chamberlain sat in company with his old chief. Between its lines keen light shines on the relationship between the two dominant members.

"Some supposed then," Lord Morley writes, "and Mr. Chamberlain has said since, that when he entered the Cabinet room on this memorable occasion he intended to be conciliatory. Witnesses of the scene thought that the Prime Minister made little attempt in that direction."

If it were possible to conceive Mr. Disraeli in charge of the Home Rule Bill of 1886—and nothing was impossible to the Tory leader who grafted household suffrage on a Reform Bill—it would be certain that Mr. Chamberlain would never have left his old party. For the management of delicate affairs a man of supreme tact is better than a transcendent genius who, with his head in the lofty companionship of the clouds, is apt to stumble over a not insuperable obstacle at his feet.

## XXVII

HENRY IRVING

ON the eve of Henry Irving's departure on his last visit to the United States I met him at a little farewell dinner given at the Reform Club. Hearing my wife and I would be in the United States whilst he was there, he engaged us to pay a visit to his theatre and sup with him after. I thought no more about the engagement; Irving's memory was faithful. Arriving in New York on a Saturday morning, we went off to spend a quiet time at the country house of a friend. On the Tuesday the following telegram arrived from Henry Irving, at the time playing in New York:—

“Tracked down at last. Love to both. Hope you are coming to play to-night. Have reserved box for you and friends. Supper at Delmonico's.

“H. I., Broadway Theatre.”

Not able to accept this invitation we named for visiting the theatre a night that chanced to be one on which he was engaged for supper. His hospitable intent was not to be baffled by circumstance. He commissioned his friend and lieutenant, Bram Stoker, to act as host, and after the theatre closed we had a merry supper at Delmonico's. Irving was playing Dante, one of the unfortunate accidents that seemed to



accumulate towards the close of a long run of well-earned good fortune.

With a pretty wide range of acquaintance, I count Henry Irving among half a dozen of the most delightful men I have known. With a charming presence, a courtly manner, he was princely in his generosity. The only value money had for him was that it enabled him to give pleasure and benefit to others. A member of the Lyceum staff told me that, having an introduction to Irving, he approached him with modest expectation in the way of salary. For the sake of securing so advantageous an opening he would gladly have commenced on nothing a week. Irving, after some chat, offered him an engagement with a salary three times as much as the one he was earning.

At one of the little suppers he delighted to give in his room in the old Beefsteak Club, at the back of the Lyceum stage, I one night noticed a beautiful chair set at the table.

"Do you really admire it?" he asked.

"Certainly. It is a genuine Chippendale."

"Take it with you," he quickly replied; and when I left by the stage-door I had the greatest difficulty in preventing him sending the chair down to be placed on the top of my hansom.

He was effusively grateful for any little gift or favour. For New Year's Day, 1899, I sent him a copy of Sidney Lee's "Life of Shakespeare," just published. He replied from Bournemouth on January 2, 1899—

"MY DEAR LUCY,—My kindest greeting to you and Mrs. Lucy, and all gladness and happiness to you in the coming on of time.

"It was more than kind of you to send me that

book of Sidney Lee's, the only one that has done any justice to Shakespeare, the player as well as playwright.

"Shakespeare, wise man, was never manager of a theatre. He was an actor who took a share. When Shakespeare's Company is spoken of, it should mean the company to which the poet belonged.

"Thank you for all your kind wishes. I only need a little rest and a little sunshine to be quite well again. I find this doing nothing very hard work. You know, nobody better—isn't it the hardest work of all?

"Yours sincerely,

"HENRY IRVING."

There is something pathetic in the cry for "a little rest and a little sunshine."

The last time we saw him on the stage he played Louis XI. to a crowded and enthusiastic audience. It was his farewell to the London stage, and we were present in response to the following letter:—

"*July 8, 1905.*

"DEAR MRS. LUCY,—Thank you for your very kind invitation, which it would be a delight to accept, were it possible. But I shall be 'tied to the stake' till the 18th and cannot fly.

"Were you in London I should ask you to grace our last night—the 18th—with your presence.

"I am, sincerely yours,

"HENRY IRVING."

When the curtain fell on the final scene the cheering lasted several minutes. Again and again the curtain rose, and Irving bowed his thanks. Moved by

unconscious premonition that some of them would see his face no more, the throng before the curtain would not let him go.

The last of many times he lent to our table at Ashley Gardens the graciousness of his presence was at a little luncheon given by way of farewell to Mr. Choate, who, retiring from the post of American Minister, was returning home. Irving was playing somewhere in the Midlands. But a journey to town and back in time for the play did not baulk his desire to be present. He was evidently in ill-health and, when he arrived, in low spirits. Finding himself in cheerful company he speedily brightened up, and we saw again the smile of rare beauty that illuminated his face as he talked or listened.

Ellen Terry dined with us just before she paid her last visit to the United States which proved the truth of the saying "Journeys end in lovers meeting." Among the company was Mr. Arthur Balfour. He came on from the House of Commons, where he was engaged in debate on an important Ministerial measure. Like Mr. Gladstone, he possesses the gift of swiftly throwing off in congenial company all sense of care and official responsibility.

Ellen Terry sat strangely silent through the brilliant conversation. I fancied, being out of her ordinary line, it might bore her. Mr. Balfour leaving early to resume his duties at the House of Commons, she broke silence with a remark that showed I was mistaken. Bringing her closed hand with a thump on the table, she exclaimed, with a glance towards the door through which he had passed, "I think that man's a duck."

She told me later, with perhaps kindly exaggeration, that she had never enjoyed a dinner-party more.

When Irving consented to sit for his portrait for my little collection, he stipulated that his dog should be with him. He is accordingly painted with Fussie on his knee. Fussie was a present to Ellen Terry from the jockey, Fred Archer. Irving appropriated him, and the two became inseparable. The dog was a familiar figure at the supper parties on the stage at the Lyceum that wound up first nights of memorable plays. Taking it for granted that as they were there when he came in from the dressing-room with his master, they were desirable people, Fussie was sufficiently amiable as he trotted about among the crowd. But he could put on other manners. When Irving was lying ill in Grafton Street, I called to see him. Fussie would not allow me to approach the bed. His master was sick, apparently helpless. I might be intent on taking advantage of his weakness to do him an injury. Anyhow, Fussie, thinking it well to be on the safe side, snarled ominously when I advanced.

On one occasion when Irving and his company were going on a tour in the United States, Fussie was, as a matter of course, included in the troupe. He got out of the train at the town station at Southampton, and when the company arrived at the wharf he was nowhere to be seen. As the boat was about to start, nothing could be done in the way of looking him up. So Irving set out on his voyage disconsolate. Six weeks later, Fussie, footsore, travel-stained, but capable of wagging his tail, trotted in at the stage-door of the Lyceum Theatre in Wellington Street, Strand. How he found his way is a mystery he was never able to explain. Of course the road was absolutely unfamiliar to him.

Fussie came to an end at Manchester under tragic



circumstances. A workman taking off his coat threw it down, partly hiding an open trap. He had brought some bread and meat for his supper. Fussie, scenting this, began foraging, fell through the trap-door, and was killed instantly. The news was kept from Irving till the play was over. He said little, but took the body home to his hotel in his cab. Ellen Terry and his son Lawrence, arriving later, found him eating his supper with Fussie curled up in his familiar rug on the sofa. Irving was talking to the dog as if he were still alive. He carried him back to London in the train next day and buried him in the dogs' cemetery in Hyde Park.

Irving used to tell with dramatic effect a story about Wills, sometime editor of *Once a Week*. When Wills was a boy ten years old, he was taken to see Edmund Kean play "Macbeth." In the murder scene he was so affected by the realistic power of the actor that, seized with a severe attack of nausea, he hurried from the box.

Ten years later, he was lunching at a chop-house in Fleet Street when a man entered, sat down at a table near him and ordered a meal. He was a perfect stranger to Wills, who after a few minutes' propinquity was again seized with a fit of nausea, from which he had not suffered since as a boy he was at the theatre on the occasion mentioned. He was obliged to leave the room. When some minutes later he paid his bill, the waiter said to him—

"Did you see that gentleman at the table near you? That's Edmund Kean."

## XXVIII

### CECIL RHODES BEFORE THE RAID

I CAME in close contact with Cecil Rhodes in 1894. It was the year before the Jameson Raid "upset his apple-cart," and had much to do with the outbreak of racial feeling between Boers and British that resulted in a terrible war. At the time of our stay at Cape Town, the relations between Oom Paul, President of the Transvaal Republic, and the British Governor (Sir Henry Loch), though not openly ruptured, were decidedly strained.

On arrival at Cape Town early on a Sunday morning marked by the almanac as one of the last days in December, but which was sultrier than our hottest summer, we were met by an aide-de-camp from Government House inviting us to lunch with Sir Henry and Lady Loch at their cottage residence some eight or ten miles out of Cape Town. At table we happened to sit on either side of Cecil Rhodes, a happy accident as it turned out. I had met him in London during his flying visit of the previous year. As we sat together and talked, the acquaintance warmed to a measure of friendship that induced him to ask us to make Groote Schuur our home during our stay at the Cape. This was doubly welcome since, in addition to the pleasure of his daily company, it meant deliverance from the miseries of our abode in the City.

Next morning we shifted our quarters to Cecil Rhodes's quaint old house, built on a slope of Table Mountain. On one flank of it bloomed an acre of blue hydrangea, his favourite flower. He gave us a spacious bedroom, decorated with, among other pieces of furniture, an old Dutch wardrobe, whose silver hinges gained fresh brilliancy from the century-old dark wood they clasped. Rhodes had, somehow, gained the reputation of being a woman-hater. Certainly, with the possible exception of his sister, Mrs. Lucy was the first lady who had been a guest at Groote Schuur. He engaged the gardener's wife to act as maid, withdrawing himself to sleep in a bachelor's quarter built at the end of the garden. Hearing that Horace Plunkett (now Sir Horace, first Vice-President of the Irish Board of Agriculture) had been our table companion on the voyage out, he sent him a pressing invitation to put up at Groote Schuur, a proposal cheerfully accepted by a man who had something of our experience in Cape Town.

Rhodes was at the time partly rebuilding his house, which, as its name implies, was originally a granary. Nearly every week a bale of carpets or a case of furniture arrived from London. These were commonplace by comparison with a little bowl in the study which contained a couple of handfuls of small pieces of gold, dug up on the site of an ancient temple far away up country. It was, Rhodes believed, part of the gold of Ophir, current in the days of Solomon. A couple of years later, when the alterations were completed and the new furniture installed, a fire broke out at Groote Schuur, partly destroying the place. It was rebuilt, and, by the owner's will, bequeathed as a residence for the Cape Premier, the spacious grounds being turned

into a public park, enclosing a zoological garden. As for the simple-mannered, big-hearted, clear-headed history-maker who once lived there, he sleeps in the solitude of the Matoppos Mountains.

With respect to this choice of burial-place, Mr. George Wyndham told me an interesting story. He also in later time was a guest at Groote Schuur. Accompanying his host on an expedition up country, they halted for a while on the crest of the mighty Matoppos which dominates a hundred miles of veldt. One morning, Rhodes, who had shown himself at breakfast in a mood of solemn thought, went out and lay full length near the edge of the hill, gazing on the scene below. He remained there half an hour, and came back in brighter spirits. From a chance remark he dropped, Mr. Wyndham believes that it was in this reverie he conceived the idea of having his grave dug amid the silence and solitude of the mountain top.

We had a cheerful little dinner-party every night whilst our host remained at Cape Town. Amongst the guests were Dr. Jameson, Mr. Selous, and another mighty hunter, just down from the North. On the first night at dinner, I observed his extreme embarrassment and discomfort. I attributed it to weariness after a long journey. In the confidence of the verandah and under the cheering influence of a cigar, he confided to me that it was the stiff shirt-collar imposed upon him by civilisation as part of his dinner-dress that wrought him anguish. He had not worn such a thing for months.

We generally sat on the verandah after dinner till midnight struck. Rhodes, in ordinary company a stubbornly reticent man, the despair of London hosts and hostesses, expanded under the mellowing influence



of the cool air, the starlit, almost blue sky of a South African night. It was the height of the prosperity of South Africa, prices of mines and of land booming in all directions. When I came home, friends, hearing I had been the guest of Cecil Rhodes for three weeks, surmised that I must have been "put in for some good things." With the exception of the gold of Ophir, not to-day a marketable commodity, Rhodes in his conversations with me never alluded to gold-mines or diamond industries. What he talked about on the verandah were books new and old, more especially anything that had reference to the history of Rome before the last of the Imperial Cæsars was dead and turned to clay. He had in his pay in Rome an expert daily employed in copying out stored manuscript records of the history of Imperial Rome.

Nor did we talk about politics, home or South African. Only once, I remember, when he was poring over a big map of Africa, he put his finger on Cairo, and drawing it slowly down the length of the parchment till it rested on Cape Town, said, "I want to see the map painted red from there to there."

With the creation of Rhodesia, a considerable measure of his heart's desire was fulfilled before he was carried up to rest on the mountain top.

Rhodes was a faithful friend to men of all degree to whom he became attached. His butler, an excellent servant, came from the English village in which was Rhodes' father's parish church. He was inclined to be consumptive, and Rhodes took him out to South Africa in the belief that the climate, if it did not effect a complete cure, would check the disease. One morning, entering my host's study, I found him in a state of unusual depression. I thought something

had gone wrong with De Beers, or with political affairs at Cape Town. There were tears in his eyes when he told me how, after a long spell of good health, the butler had that morning been suddenly attacked with hæmorrhage.

There was only one thing to be done. He must be sent off up country to take a month's rest in the exhilarating air of the veldt. As, in addition to acting as valet, he was in charge of the whole domestic arrangements of the house, this meant serious personal discomfort to the master. Rhodes did not give that part of the business a thought, but packed the man off within a few hours.

After leaving the Cape, I saw Rhodes only twice. Once was in the following year, when he visited London. We invited him to luncheon. He said he would come on two conditions—that he might bring Dr. Jameson and that there should be no other guests. So we sat four at table, and Rhodes was as talkative as was his wont on the verandah at Groote Schuur.

The last time I saw him he was sitting in the witnesses' chair in the room of the South African Commission. Before him were grouped a dozen of the ablest men in England, some eager to probe the mystery that brooded over the Jameson Raid. Others, and these the more embarrassing, were concerned for the preservation of diplomatic reticence. On a table set at the witness's right elbow was a plate of sandwiches and a tankard of London stout. Cecil Rhodes munched his sandwiches, from time to time thoughtfully raised the tankard to his lips, and did not in any possibly inconvenient particular add to the information of the Commissioners.

## XXIX

### LORD RUSSELL OF KILLOWEN

JOURNEYING across the United States in the early 'eighties, on the way to Japan, at a roadway station halfway between Denver and Colorado Springs, the train was boarded by a comfortably stout gentleman in a serge suit, with a knitted woollen vest and a low-crowned felt hat. He might have passed without notice but for the circumstance that he carried a red brief-bag, unmistakably the property of an English Q.C. This item in the midst of rolling prairies concentrated attention. Looking more closely, I recognised in the sun-browned stranger Charles Russell, who, clutching his red bag, made his way along the crowded car as if he were pushing through a blocked passage in the Law Courts.

I had casual acquaintance with him in the Lobby of the House of Commons. This chance meeting was the beginning of an intimate friendship that grew in warmth to the end. We stayed at Colorado Springs, and in the afternoon had a pleasant drive to Manitou and the Garden of the Gods. Russell, then plain Mr., leader of his circuit, was one of the quickest-tempered, warmest-hearted of Irishmen. He learned a lesson at Manitou, where stood a little hotel with a spacious verandah looked down upon by the majesty of Pike's

Peak. There were many guests, few waiters, and, as Russell meant to catch the evening train going east, our time was limited. After impatiently suffering delay extending over a quarter of an hour, Russell began rapping the table with a knife and clinking the glasses.

"Come, come," he said sharply to the waiter when that dignitary sauntered up, "hurry along with luncheon."

"Wal, sir," said the waiter, eyeing him unconcernedly, "if the place don't suit you, you can go on to the next."

As the nearest was Colorado Springs, whence we had driven, Russell, taking in the situation at a glance, subsided. When presently the waiter lounged up with the meal, he began to chat with him, and by his affability and humour won him over in a few minutes.

Many years later, when Russell was Attorney-General, I witnessed another sudden and complete checking of a hasty temper. We were walking in the neighbourhood of Tadworth Court, his house by Epsom Downs. A scorcher passing on a bicycle nearly ran over us.

"Be careful," said Russell, angrily.

The man slowed up and, turning round, poured forth a torrent of horrible abuse. Russell made no reply. He stood quietly watching the man, as if to impress his face and figure on his memory. It occurred to me at the moment that if, as was by no means improbable, the fellow, being in the dock or the witness-box, some day came into the hands of the Attorney-General, professional duty would receive an impetus.



Russell was hugely delighted with a remark by his newly made friend the Manitou waiter.

"This seems a very healthy town," he said, determined to be pleasant.

"I guess it's pretty wal," replied the waiter with profound gravity. "When we built a schoolhouse nothing would do for some of the citizens but they must have a cemetery. We laid it out and walled it in, but we had to shoot a man to start it."

During his stay on the ranch Russell picked up another story which he brought to London and told with dramatic effect. It appealed to him professionally, as illustrating the readiness with which the plea of acting in self-defence was accepted by Western juries trying a prisoner on the charge of murder or manslaughter.

Three citizens of Denver were drinking in a little parlour off the bar of a saloon. One of them, smitten with an attack of heart disease, suddenly fell dead. His companions, conscious of a shady record, were certain that as matters stood they would be accused of killing the man. They strolled into the bar, ordered a couple of cigars, which they knew were kept in a back room, and whilst the barman was away on the errand they carried in the corpse and fixed him in a chair with his head bowed on his hands, as if he were sleeping off a bout of drinking.

"He'll pay for the cigars," one said, pointing a thumb over his shoulder at the dead man. And they walked out.

The barman waited a reasonable time for the sleeper to awaken. Reckoning it had lapsed, he approached him, shook him roughly, and demanded payment for the cigars. To his horror the man rolled

off the chair, and he saw he was dead. At this moment two fresh customers entered, and the barman, recognising his peril as the others had done, said with an oath—

“I did it in self-defence.”

Charles Russell, whether as plain Q.C., Attorney-General, or Lord Chief Justice, was the most hospitable of men, alike at his town and country house. When he lived in Harley Street and was rapidly making his way to the front on the political stage, he usually gave a dinner once a week through the Parliamentary Session. They were all interesting, though saddened for some by the circumstance that Russell not only did not smoke himself, but resented smoking by others. It was poor consolation for men accustomed to regard a cigar as not the least delectable adjunct to a dinner, to see the host spooning snuff into his gratified nostrils, and flourishing the bandana that was the terror of hostile witnesses, the dompter of juries.

One dinner, given during the height of the Home Rule controversy, 1886, was memorable by reason of the bold admixture of company. It included Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Parnell, and Lord Randolph Churchill. On arriving, Lord Randolph, having made curiously formal greeting, whispered: “It wants only one other man to make the circle complete.”

“Who is that?” I asked.

“Arthur Balfour,” he growled.

Lord Randolph was in very bad temper, an occasional frame of mind he was not habituated to conceal. It appeared that the host had not mentioned to him that Parnell was expected, and he had complained that he was compromised by meeting in the fraternity of the dinner-table the Irish leader, at that

time particularly unsavoury in Conservative circles. It occurred to me at the time to be a little difficult to realise this unconventional personage compromised by sitting at meat with the Irish leader. There was a time, not far past, when if secret negotiations and intimate intercourse with Irish members would compromise a man, Lord Randolph would have been hopelessly embarrassed.

It is one of the best features in English political life that the rancour of partisanship is not habitually carried into the social circle. Amongst the capitals of Europe, it was only in London that such a dinner-party as this could have taken place. The principle underlying its conception might be further extended. As a rule, through the London season, diners-out in the political world find the company runs pretty straightly in grooves. At the house of a Unionist belonging to either House of Parliament, one finds fellow-guests of the host's party colour. The same experience is suffered at the table of a Liberal. In a very small way, with something less of Lord Russell's audacity, we have always observed his custom. At our table Trojan and Tyrian meet in about equal proportions, and, as far as I have observed, seem to enjoy the hour of truce.

Mr. Balfour, dining at Ashley Gardens whilst Leader of the House of Commons, not yet Prime Minister, met Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, then Leader of the Opposition. The only point of controversy that arose was upon the proposition that Sir Henry should take the hostess in to dinner, he insisting that the honour properly belonged to Mr. Balfour. At another time when Mr. Balfour was dining with us, turning over in my mind the names of people he would

be most pleased to meet, I felt no doubt about Sir William Harcourt. The Unionist Education Bill was then before the House, which, in accordance with rules then operative, met at two o'clock in the afternoon, adjourned for the dinner-hour, resuming debate at nine o'clock. During the afternoon sitting, Mr. Balfour at one side of the table and Sir William Harcourt at the other had been almost viciously contending over points of the Bill. In the evening they met at table with boyish exuberance of good-fellowship.

On sitting down to dinner, Sir William announced that he would have to be in his place at the House when, at nine o'clock, debate on the Education Bill was resumed. Mr. Balfour made no remark at the moment. But when the finger of the clock approached the hour he said: "Now, Harcourt; it's getting on for nine o'clock."

Beyond all things at the dinner-table Sir William dearly loved a cigar, the bigger the better. Coffee and cigars were still afar off. But a patriot must make sacrifices for his country. Rising and pushing back his chair, he said, "I beg to move the closure," and, with a bow to the company, he departed.

Mr. Balfour stayed on till after ten o'clock. Sir William took an opportunity, somewhere about 9.30, of rising from the front Opposition bench and deploring the absence of the Leader of the House, the Minister in charge of the Bill. He marvelled what call of duty or pleasure could keep him away from his post, a little joke the point of which, possibly with the exception of confidence bestowed on his nearest colleague on the front bench, Sir William had all to himself.

Charles Russell was a member of the Two Pins Club, an institution named, if not founded, by Frank



Burnand. The derivation of the title will be found in the final syllable of the names of those famous horsemen Dick Turpin and John Gilpin. The members, who, in addition to some *Punch* men, included half a dozen well-known outsiders, met at an appointed rendezvous on fine Sunday mornings, rode out to a country hostelry, lunched, and trotted home again in good time for dinner.

One evening, riding back through Twickenham, Linley Sambourne, in the exuberance of his ever-young soul, amused the company by affecting to know the history of the dwellers in various houses by the way. This having been suffered for a quarter of an hour, Sir Frank Lockwood quietly asked—

“Did you know General Stores?”

“Stores!” cried the unsuspecting Sammy. “I should think so. I knew him when he was a captain at Aldershot. He went out to India, and won his way up.”

“Ah! he lives over there,” said Lockwood, pointing to a shop-front which bore the legend “General Stores.”

One Spring-time Sir Charles Russell, not yet Lord Chief Justice, invited the Two Pins Club to spend the week-end with him at his country place. I, habitually a week-ender by the seaside, was not a member of the club, but was included in the invitation. Lord Rosebery, a neighbour at The Durdans, came over on the Saturday night to dine at Tadworth Court. Inevitably he heard the story, which was highly popular with the club. The next day, at his bidding, we all went over to The Durdans for luncheon. There being some new faces at the table, out came the story again.

“Well,” said Lord Rosebery, “I have always suspected the Two Pins Club had only one horse among them. I know now they have only one story.”

Dining in Cromwell Road with Lord Russell of Killowen, an estate to which the unfriended Irish barrister had risen, I observed hung on the staircase Sargent's portrait of him, which had been one of the features of the Academy. It was painted in broad-bottomed wig, and the picturesque robes of the Lord Chief Justice. Sitting by the host in the drawing-room after dinner, I was struck afresh with the rare beauty of the shape of his head. Remarking that it seemed a pity that in a portrait it should be covered by a wig, I asked if he would sit for my collection of portraits of contemporaries. It includes such diverse persons as Lord Rosebery, Mr. Arthur Balfour, Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. John Morley, Mr. Labouchere, Joseph Cowen of Newcastle, Lord Randolph Churchill, Tenniel, Burnand, and Henry Irving.

These were busy men to submit themselves to the infliction of posing for their portraits. The difficulty was overcome by what turned out to be a happy thought. More than twenty years ago, at an exhibition at the Grosvenor Gallery, I observed a portrait in Kitcat form by an unknown artist. I was much struck by the style of the work and the excellence of the likeness. I wrote to the artist, explaining that, being a busy person, I could not find time to sit at his studio, but if he would come to my study and paint me as I worked with my secretary, I would give him a commission. The offer was accepted, with admirable result, and the system was extended in other directions.

Thus Mr. Arthur Balfour, at the time Chief Secretary for Ireland, was painted at work in the Irish Office. Lord Randolph Churchill sat at his desk in his house in Connaught Place, and Lord Rosebery, at the time Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, more or less

meekly suffered in a smoking-jacket in his study at Berkeley Square.

Made acquainted with these conditions, Lord Russell readily consented. But the Blind Fury with the abhorred shears was already close at hand. Some sittings were given at his town house, the work being continued at Tadworth, whither the dying man repaired. It is a splendid portrait, the robe of the Lord Chief Justice, with the mysteriously named S.S. collar round his neck, adding grace and dignity to the figure. There is a pathetic look on the fine face that indicates consciousness of the approaching end.

## XXX

### MR. GLADSTONE

I WAS with Mr. Gladstone through all the Midlothian campaigns save one. The exception befell in 1886 when I was chained to the editorial desk in Bouverie Street. During one visit to Edinburgh there happened an incident for the time disquieting. I had been lunching with a Scotch Member. My host, a Lancashire Member named Summers, and myself were walking into town when I suddenly became aware that I had lost the sight of one eye.

I was at the time something more than usually overworked, grappling with the nightly task of telegraphing a letter to the *Daily News* rarely less than a column and a half in length, describing Mr. Gladstone's tour. This was in addition to my daily letter to the *Provinces*, of equal length, with the weekly epistle by way of filling up time on Thursday. I always remember the exceeding kindness of Willie Summers. He led me off to the hospital, where an expert, having examined my eyes, gave me the comforting assurance that whilst there was the possibility of regaining the lost sight at some indefinite period, I should certainly be deprived of it for a year or two.

There was nothing for it but to give up my work at Edinburgh and return home. Summers and half a dozen other good fellows saw me comfortably installed



in a sleeping berth of the night mail going south. I remember as I lay awake, the train speeding through town and country, taking with my remaining eye a look into the future. It was no use repining. The thing was, how was I to get along with only one eye? Evidently I should have to wear a patch. Should it be flesh-coloured or black? I decided upon black and fell asleep.

When I awoke at break of day I opened my eyes, and lo! the sight had returned to the damaged one. It was a little weak to begin with, but gradually grew stronger, and I have never since had trouble with it.

I saw a good deal of Mr. Gladstone during this marvellous epoch in a memorable life. In addition to being present at all his speeches, I met him frequently at luncheon or dinner at Dalmeny and elsewhere. For those who watched or shared the triumph of his earlier visits to the constituency there was something melancholy in the contrast of the final act in the unparalleled drama. Between the campaign that presaged the downfall of Lord Beaconsfield's Ministry in 1880 and the one in 1892, which for the last time returned Mr. Gladstone member for Midlothian, there was fixed the great gulf of Home Rule. During the earlier campaigns up to, inclusive of, that of 1885, he was the idol of a united enthusiastic party. Meetings at which he appeared were tumultuous in their welcome. When he left the hall tens of thousands who could not find sitting or standing room within its walls waited patiently in the streets to see him drive by. A cheering crowd extended for fully a mile on the road to Dalmeny. A body of the younger Liberals made a nightly habit of forming an escort, running on either side of the carriage all the way.

In 1892 all was changed. There were anxious days when doubt darkened his committee rooms as to whether he, formerly master of a magnificent majority, might creep in at the head of the poll. His meetings were still crowded, but the multitude in the streets had melted like snow on the river. There was no more racing of an escort on the Dalmeny Road. I recall the scene in the library at Dalmeny when Lord Tweedmouth, then Mr. Marjoribanks, Liberal Whip in the House of Commons, brought the news that the national poll had closed with a majority of forty for the Liberals.

"Too small, too small," said Mr. Gladstone, shaking his head sadly and speaking in a low grave voice that betrayed his emotion. Constitutionally sanguine, he had counted upon the country giving him a majority of a hundred.

Here is a note from my diary made during the last of the triumphal progresses through Midlothian.

*"November 18, 1885.*

"Went to Dalmeny and had a cheerful time. Only a small party at luncheon—Lord and Lady Rosebery, Mrs. Gladstone, Miss Mary Gladstone, a Gladstone son whom I don't know, Mr. Spencer Lyttelton, Lady Spencer, and a charming young wife, daughter of Sir John Lubbock. I sat between her and Lady Spencer and had an interesting conversation with the latter about Ireland.

"Mr. Gladstone came down half an hour late and was rallied by our host upon his unpunctuality. Lord Rosebery reminded him of something he had once said about punctuality at luncheon time. Mr. Gladstone took up the point with as much energy as if it

were one of Lord Randolph's accusations in the House of Commons. Finally he drew from Lord Rosebery the admission that he had been in error, that he (Mr. Gladstone) had never said anything about being punctual at luncheon, but had recommended the desirability of absence of formality—that anybody should drop in as they pleased and sit where they liked.

“Mr. G. was in the liveliest humour, talking all the time in a rich musical voice. I sat immediately opposite to him, with a pot of fern between us. This he presently removed and talked to me about the *Punch* staff, being much interested in the Wednesday dinner.

“After luncheon Lord Rosebery proposed that we should go and see the Castle, an ancient ruin he has rebuilt on the sea coast which bounds one side of Dalmeny Park. Forgot to note that Lieutenant Greely was of the party. He was very quiet at the luncheon. A tall, narrow-chested, delicate-looking man, with bushy black whiskers, and spectacles; more like a student than an Arctic explorer. Lord Rosebery walked with me to the Castle, Lady Spencer went on before with Sir John Lubbock's daughter, whose married name I did not catch. Presently Greely arrived, and afterwards Mr. Gladstone.

“The Castle is a charming place, full of old furniture and precious memorials, chiefly belonging to Stuart times. There are also many old books. Mr. Gladstone was, as before, in the highest spirits, talking incessantly. He picked up one of the books and, sitting on a broad window seat, began reading and discoursing. We spent a good half hour here sauntering through the rooms. At four o'clock, much after his usual time, Mr. Gladstone went off for a walk with Lady Spencer and Lord

Rosebery. Lieutenant Greely walked with me to my cab, and we had a long talk.

"Mr. G. was got up in the most extraordinary style. He wore a narrow-skirted, square-cut tail coat, made, I should say, in the year the Reform Bill was drafted. Over his shoulders was a little cape, on his head a white soft felt hat. The back view was irresistible. Mrs. Gladstone waits upon him and watches him like a hen with its first chicken. She is always pulling up his collar or fastening a button, or putting him to sit in some particular chair, little attentions he accepts without remark, and with much the same placid air a very small and good-tempered babe wears when being put to bed."

Remembering our talk at Dalmeny and Mr. Gladstone's interest in the personnel of the *Punch* staff, I some time later invited him to meet them at my house. He replied—

"4, WHITEHALL GARDENS,

"November 14, 1888.

"DEAR MR. LUCY,—I thank you much for the invitation to join the goodly company to be assembled round your table on the 11th of Dec. But I am living in hope of escape to the country before that date, and therefore I fear I am precluded from accepting your kind invitation.

"At the same time, if the dinner is in any case to come off, and if it were allowed me in the event of my being in or near London to offer myself, I should thankfully accept such a reservation.

"Faithfully yours,

"W. E. GLADSTONE."



The gathering came off on May 7, 1889. I always remember as an instance of Mr. G.'s extreme courtesy and unselfish consideration for others, that, brought up in days when smoking was regarded as bad form, personally disliking the smell of tobacco, he commissioned his son Herbert to see me and insist that at the forthcoming dinner we should not depart from the custom of the weekly symposium, but should at the proper time smoke. The *Punch* staff were represented by the editor, Frank Burnand; Tenniel, not yet Sir John; Du Maurier, Linley Sambourne, and Harry Furniss. Outsiders, in addition to the guest of the evening, were Lord Granville, David Plunket, now Lord Rathmore, and Lord Charles Beresford.

I quote from my diary—

"Mr. Gladstone dined with us to-night to meet the editor and artists of the *Punch* staff. Was much struck on nearer view with that feeling of surprise at his amazing physical and mental virility which surprises every observer of him in public life. The only casual indications that he has entered his eightieth year take the form of increasing deafness and a slight huskiness in his voice, which latter wears off as he talks—and he talks with abounding freeness, though, as some one observed, he is also 'a most attractive listener.' One notable thing about his personal appearance is the brightness of his eyes. They are fuller and more unclouded than those of many a man under fifty. Dowered at birth with a magnificent constitution, he has all his life taken great care of it.

"Talking about John Bright, he spoke regretfully of the carelessness with which his old friend dealt with himself.

“‘Bright,’ he said emphatically, ‘did nothing’ he should do to preserve his health, and everything he should not.’

“If he had only been wise, and wise in time, there is, in Mr. Gladstone’s opinion, no reason why he should not have been alive to-day, hale and strong. He never would listen to advice about himself. Mr. Gladstone told a funny story about his habits on this score. Up to within the last ten years he had no recognised medical attendant. There was some anonymous unknown person to whom he went for advice, of whom he spoke oracularly.

“‘But,’ said Mr. Gladstone, with that curious approach to a wink that sometimes varies his grave aspect, ‘he would never tell his name, or say where he lived.’

“About ten years ago Mr. Bright surprised Sir Andrew Clark by appearing in his consulting room. Sir Andrew, who knew all about his peculiarities in this matter, asked him how it was he came to see him.

“‘Oh,’ said Mr. Bright, ‘it’s Gladstone; he never will let me rest.’

“The mischief of long neglect had been accomplished, but Mr. Bright acknowledged the immense benefit he received, and nothing more was heard of the anonymous doctor.

“Mr. Gladstone used to advise Mr. Bright as one panacea for preserving health of mind and body never to think of political affairs after getting into bed or on awakening in the morning.

“‘I never do that,’ Mr. Gladstone said; ‘I never allow myself to do it. In the most exciting political crisis I dismiss current matters entirely from my mind when I go to bed, and will not think of them till I get

up in the morning. I told Bright this, and he said, "That's all very well for you, but my way is exactly the reverse. I think over all my speeches when I am in bed" !'

"Like Sancho Panza, Mr. Gladstone has a great gift of sleep. Seven hours he always takes, 'and,' he added with a smile, 'I should like to have eight. I hate getting up in the morning and hate it the same every morning. But one can do everything by habit, and when I have had my seven hours' sleep I get up.'

"He evidently enjoyed the company in which he found himself, and was in bounding spirits. Nothing was more surprising than the range of his topics, unless it were the completeness of his information upon each. Homer early came under review, and for ten minutes he talked about him with brightening eye, and the deep rich tones of voice used only when he is moved. One thing I remember he said about Homer that struck me as new was that he evidently did not like Venus—Aphrodite Mr. Gladstone preferred to call her. He cited half a dozen illustrations of Homer's dislike for a goddess usually fascinating to mankind. Pictures and artists he discussed, with special reference to the picture shows now open in London. He said he always liked to go round a picture gallery with an artist.

" 'Artists,' he said, 'looking at a picture, see in it less to criticise and more to admire than is possible to ordinary people. An artist sees more in a man's face than you or I.'

"Thirty-five times Mr. Gladstone has had his portrait painted. He had, he said, the good fortune to have fallen into the hands of a great artist, who made the minimum of demand upon his time. In his individual

case, five hours sufficed Millais for sittings for the most elaborate portrait, and this time was given by Mr. Gladstone with real pleasure.

“‘Is Millais, then, a charming companion when at work?’ some one asked.

“‘Yes,’ said Mr. Gladstone; ‘but not because he talks. To see him at work is a delight, observing the way in which he throws his heart and soul into it.’

“Mr. Gladstone’s memory is amazing, more particularly for events that took place half a century ago. Oddly enough, where memory has always failed him is in the matter of faces. This gift, precious to princes, was withheld from him. He told how some fifty years ago there was a man going about with some theory (now sunk into oblivion) by the application of which, in connexion with electricity, he estimated a man’s character as a phrenologist does by feeling his bumps.

“‘There were he told me, three faculties in which I was lacking,’ said Mr. Gladstone. ‘One was that I had no memory for faces, and I am sorry to say it is quite true.’

“What were the other two gifts lacking he did not say. This forgetfulness of faces he evidently deeply deplored, probably recognising in it the occasion of embarrassment.

“He talked a good deal about old times in the House of Commons, lapsing into that charming tone of reminiscence which on rare occasions, on quiet Tuesday evenings or Friday nights, in olden days delighted the House. One scene he recalled with as much ease as if it happened yesterday, and told the story with undesigned dramatic power. It took place in the year 1841, in the division on Sir Robert Peel’s resolution declaring lack of confidence in the ministry of Lord



Melbourne. It was carried by a majority of 312 against 311.

“‘You were there,’ he said to Earl Granville, sitting immediately opposite to him. ‘You had not left the Commons then. Didn’t you vote in the division?’\* ”

“Lord Granville deprecatingly shook his head, and, to Mr. Gladstone’s undisguised amazement, admitted he could not remember what took place in the House of Commons on a particular night forty-eight years ago! To him the scene was as vivid as if it had happened at the morning sitting he had just left to come on to dinner. The question was one on which party passion ran high. Forces were so evenly divided that every vote was of fateful consequence.

“‘The Whips of those days, somehow or other,’ he observed parenthetically, ‘seemed to know better than they do now how a division would go.’ ”

“It was known that there would be, on one side or the other, a majority of one. There was a Whig member almost at death’s door.

“‘He was dead,’ Mr. Gladstone added emphatically, ‘except that he had just a little breath left in him. The question was, could he be brought to the House? The Whips said he must, and he was. He came in a Bath chair, and I never forget the look on his face, his eyes glassy and upturned, his jaws stiff. We, a lot of young Conservatives, clustered round the door and saw him wheeled in. At first we thought they had brought a corpse. He voted, and the Bill was carried by a majority of one.’ ”

\* Here Mr. Gladstone’s marvellous memory was at fault. Lord Granville, then ranking as Lord Leveson, was not at the period of the episode described Seated in the House of Commons.

"In pathetic tone he regretted that opportunities of visiting America had disappeared.

"‘I always feel,’ he said, ‘a sense of deep gratitude to the American people. They have been exceedingly kind to me, kinder than I deserve. At the time of their great war I gave utterance to expression of opinions which, considering my connexion with the Ministry of the day, had better been left unspoken. They forget and have forgiven. I am almost daily receiving tokens of the warm-heartedness of the American people, and should like to look them face to face in their own country.’

"He talked of the lately published correspondence of Mr. Motley, the American Minister to Germany. He spoke quite enthusiastically of the letter Bismarck wrote to Motley, inviting him to go and see him.

"‘It is quite a revelation of the inner nature of the man,’ he said—‘throws a flood of light on a character habitually masked by official reserve. One is glad to think of the Bismarck disclosed by that letter.’

"He spoke with friendly warmth of quite another statesman, the Prince of Wales (King Edward VII.): ‘A shrewd man, a keen observer, full of tact, always educating himself without deliberately sitting down to learn a lesson; rarely opening a book, but keeping himself *au courant* with whatever is going on in the world; and when the time comes for him to take his part in public business, doing it thoroughly.’

"Some one asked Mr. Gladstone if he thought the manners of the House of Commons had suffered deterioration compared with former times. After a pause, during which his mind was probably reviewing his fifty years of Parliamentary life, he answered emphatically in the negative. He did not remember

Sir Charles Wetherell, who, with 'his only lucid interval' (as the Speaker of the day called the space between his waistcoat and his braceless trousers), disappeared with the unreformed Parliament. But he could recall many scenes in the House beside which the explosions of the present day sink into insignificance.

"One hopes he has forgotten, or at least refuses to remember, a scene that took place in the House of Commons during the height of the Jingo fever in the Seventies, when having gone out to vote on one of the protests against the foreign policy of Mr. Disraeli, a mob of the 'gentlemen of England' clustered by the door of the division lobby hooted and jeered him as he passed.

"Another improvement he noted in this connexion is in respect of political cartoons. In his early days, when an artist was engaged to produce a caricature, he nearly always descended to gross personal caricature, sometimes to indecency. To-day Mr. Gladstone observes in the humorous papers (he was speaking more particularly of *Punch*) a total absence of vulgarity, and a fairer treatment, which made this department of warfare always pleasing."

Here is note of another dinner-party, this time with Mr. Gladstone as the host. I leave it as it was written, perceiving in coming upon it after the lapse of nineteen years the intent of bringing into fuller light his supremacy uninfluenced by his surroundings.

"*March 15, 1890.*—Dined to-night with Gladstone in St. James's Square, a house he has rented for the season, a roomy gloomy mansion built when George I. was king. On the pillars of the porch stand in admirable preservation two of the wrought iron extinguishers in which in days gone by the link boys

used to thrust their torches when they had brought master or mistress home or convoyed a guest. Inside hideous light-absorbing flock papers prevail. One gets a sight rare in these days of the gloominess amid which our grandfathers dwelt.

"The dinner-table was as loveless in appearance as everything else. Evidently sore lack of the delicate taste that knows how to fling flowers about and make tables bright with chastened light and dainty colour. There was a central candelabra in which blazed eight candles without a shade. On either side stood two others, making hideous bare light over the table. It was more than even Mr. G., presumably accustomed to this kind of thing, could stand. After a while he ordered the smaller candlesticks to be removed. The company, including myself, was mediocre; the surroundings such as I have hinted at. The host made up for all shortcomings. He talked with unbroken flow of spirits, always having more to say on any subject that turned up, and saying it better, than any one else. His memory is as amazing as his opportunities of acquiring knowledge have been unique.

"In his eighty-first year, as we sat at table to-night, he recalled as if it were yesterday an incident that happened when he was eighteen months old. Prowling about the nursery on all fours, there suddenly flashed upon his consciousness the existence of his nurse as she towered above him. He remembered her voice and the very pattern of her frock. This was his earliest recollection, his first clear consciousness of existence. His memory of Canning when he stood for Liverpool in 1812 was perfectly clear, for he was then nearly as old as three and took an intelligent interest in public affairs."



Of a later date was his memory of Parliamentary elections and the strange processes by which they were accomplished. The poll was kept open for days, and the custom was for voters to be shut up in pens ten at a time. Emerging from these enclosures, they recorded their votes. The gatherings were called tallies, and the reckoning up of them was a matter watched with breathless interest in the constituency. It was always a point of honour for a side to get its tally first recorded at the polling booth.

He told with great gusto of an incident that befell at a Liverpool election in the first quarter of the century. The poll opened at eight o'clock in the morning, and the Liberal Party, determined to have a start, marshalled ten voters, and with them filled the pen by the polling booth as early as four in the morning. The Conservatives were to all appearances beaten in this first move. But their defeat was only apparent. Presently a barrel of beer conveniently tapped was rolled up to the pen where time hung heavy on the hands of the expectant voters. They naturally regarded this as a delicate attention on the part of their friends, and cans being handy they liberally helped themselves. After a while consternation fell upon them. Man after man withdrew, till the pen was empty, and ten Conservatives waiting in reserve rushed in and took possession of the pen.

"The beer," said Mr. Gladstone, laughing till his eyes moistened, "had been heavily jalaped."

In June, 1895, the Kiel Canal was opened by the German Emperor. Sir Donald Currie, who on earlier occasions had been Mr. Gladstone's princely entertainer on health-giving sea-trips, conceived the idea of conveying him to the spectacle in one of the latest additions

to the Union-Castle Line fleet. Mr. G., who had for some time been in ill-health, cordially accepted the invitation. The *Tantallon Castle* was assigned to the service, and an interesting company of guests invited to share the privilege of the unique expedition.

It will appear from the subjoined log of the voyage that Mr. Gladstone narrowly escaped from an accident that might have rounded off a marvellous career by the commonplace incident of drowning.

"*Hamburg, Thursday, June 13, '95.*—*Tantallon Castle* reached mouth of the Elbe this afternoon after pleasant passage. Yesterday the sunlight was left behind, though, as the ship made her way under grey skies over slate-hued sea, the white cliffs by North Foreland faintly gleamed in the sun. This morning it was again gloomy, with a north-east wind making overcoats desirable. Before noon the sun broke gloriously through the clouds, lighting up the red stone ramparts of Heligoland. The steamer passed the island near enough to distinguish the little hamlet lying in the flank of the rock like a handful of houses dropped into a disused quarry. Gladstone had not left his state room at this time. Before Heligoland became again as a cloud on horizon he came on deck, and had a long look at the curious speck of British territory the most patriotic Ministry of modern times surrendered to a foreign Power.

"At breakfast time this morning there was a lively sea on, that left some vacant chairs at table. Weather since has brightened into perfect summer day. Gladstone and every one else on deck. To-morrow principal citizens of Hamburg hope to entertain Gladstone at banquet given to Donald Currie's guests. Not yet

settled whether he will go. On Saturday afternoon there will be reception on board, and at night about a hundred ladies and gentlemen dine here to meet him."

"*Hamburg, Friday, June 14.*—Gladstone went ashore this afternoon; drove through Hamburg to the Alster, a lake in middle of town, the pleasure resort of citizens. The morning was fine, but before tour of lake was completed, squall of wind and rain came on. Steamer pulled up at artificial island created in centre lake, which visitors explored. It owes origin to chance remark attributed to the Emperor. Majesty said he would like to see fireworks over a cup coffee sipped in middle of lake. Straightway loyal Hamburgers, regardless of expense, made an island. The Royal procession will enter Canal from Elbe side, issuing at Kiel. Hamburg is making preparations worthy the historic occasion. Immense crowd awaited arrival of Gladstone on return of tender from tour of lake. In spite of wind and weather he walked bareheaded through the cheering throng. *Tantallon* remains here through to-morrow. Grand banquet on board at night, when principal citizens will have opportunity meeting Gladstone."

"*In the Elbe, Saturday, June 15th.*—A big banquet in Hamburg last night; to-night Sir Donald gives a return feast to the Burgomaster and about one hundred of the principal people of the town. Early to-morrow morning we start for Copenhagen with every prospect of a lively passage going round the Peninsula."

"News of Gladstone's coming seemed to have passed like wildfire up the Elbe. As the *Tantallon* steamed towards Hamburg between the low-lying,

brilliantly verdurous banks of river, ships and steamers outward bound steered close in, crews and passengers crowding the decks, eagerly scanning the Cape liner. Slowing at entrance to river, the *Fürst Bismarck*, a big German Atlantic passenger steamer, forged ahead, the band playing 'God Save the Queen' as she passed the *Tantallon*. Gladstone, sitting on hurricane deck, bared his head in response to ringing cheer with which he was hailed as German liner swept by. At Brunsbüttel we passed the western entrance of the Baltic Canal, a modest introduction to a colossal work. No signs visible of preparation for next week's ceremony. Moored off Hamburg at seven o'clock. Piers and embankments densely crowded. Population seemed to have turned out *en masse* to welcome Gladstone."

"*Stade, Sunday, June 16th.*—Threading her way down the broadening Elbe the *Tantallon Castle* dropped anchor here, a place some eighteen miles distant from Hamburg, with intent to make early morning start for Copenhagen."

Friedrichsruh, the home of Prince Bismarck, is within measurable distance. Through a long career, in the course of which the two statesmen have occasionally come in communication on grave affairs, they have never seen each other face to face. On the active mind of Sir Donald Currie flashed the idea that, being almost within hail of each other, the long task of each accomplished, both retired into private life, they would rejoice in the opportunity of grasping each other by the hand. Accordingly, accompanied by Lord Rendel, he posted off to Friedrichsruh, leaving his card and diplomatically hinting that Mr. Gladstone was in the



neighbourhood. The Prince despatched his card to the two emissaries but ignored the existence of the British statesman.

Mr. G. was exceedingly angry when he heard of the well-meant overture.

*"Off Copenhagen, Monday afternoon, June 17th.—Tantallon steered into sight of Copenhagen this afternoon after pleasant voyage. Gladstone, according to his wont, on deck greater part of day, reading. Weather cold, wind blowing hard from north-west. Matters looked lively for to-day's cruise round the Denmark coast, boldly jutting out to prevent the North Sea from bursting in on the Baltic. Reality proved better than the prospect. Heavy rain fell at midnight, beating down both wind and sea. Yesterday morning was delightful. Came abreast of Heligoland at time church bells were ringing. Our service postponed quarter of an hour so that passengers might again look at rosy-rocked islet, shining in the sunlight like a ruby set in sapphire.*

*"Was expected that Gladstone might read Lessons, which probably accounted for crowded congregation gathered in saloon. Not least interesting nor least interested was company of ship's crew, dressed all in their best, keenly watching Gladstone as he sat near the Union-Jack-decked table that served Mr. Drew for reading desk. Gladstone joined heartily in responses and singing, but left full duty of the morning service to his son-in-law.*

*"Says he feels none the worse, rather better, for Saturday night's exertions. These were by no means light. Guests from Hamburg, about one hundred ladies and gentlemen, on arrival congregated in the*

drawing-room saloon. Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone sat together by the door and shook hands with nearly everybody. Some doubt as to whether he would make speech at banquet, to which at 8.30 over two hundred sat down. As he says, he has, after fairly full prolongation of the practice, giving up public speaking. According to present intention, never more will his voice be heard in House of Commons or on public platform. Still he felt constrained by enthusiastic courtesy of Hamburgers, and by recollection of the fact that he was obliged to absent himself from the banquet they had spread for him. Moreover he recognised an opportunity, never to recur, of doing something to bring two nations into closer unity, of tying a new knot in the bonds of international peace. Hence the speech of which even here, among the Danes, one hears applauding cheers. As for the Germans privileged to catch the perfect sentences as they fell with slow emphasis from the veteran statesman's lips, their enthusiasm was boundless. Shouts of 'Hoch! hoch!' drowned the British 'Hear! hear!' which applauded the speech.

"Sometimes as Gladstone sits on deck, reading or in deep thought, he looks sadly older than on the day, not eighteen months past, when he walked out of the House of Commons, having made what was, all unknown to his audience, his last speech. On Saturday night as he stood amid these strange surroundings, English and Germans crowding round his chair, he renewed his ancient fires. He spoke throughout in full deep tones, and when he came to the fine passage wherein he found, in the facility with which the Hamburgers speak English, testimony of innate loving-kindness between the two nations, his eyes flashed, his

back straightened, and his voice rang out with its old unflinching music.

"This is a beautiful day, better even than yesterday. A quiet sea with sunshine over all. On Saturday night, when Mr. G. was sitting in the saloon receiving the German visitors, he caught sight of me. It was pleasant to see his face brighten in recognition. He hardly knows any one outside the home circle, partly because he cannot see, partly because he forgets."

"*Kiel, Thursday, June 20th.*—This evening Mr. G. and small party went aboard Sir William Ingram's yacht *Osprey* to make a tour of the battleships. As the yacht passed the British fleet, the *Royal Sovereign*, *Repulse* and *Blenheim* dipped their colours in honour of the old man, who sat on deck under shade of an ancient umbrella. The officers, crowded to the gangways, saluted, a courtesy Mr. G. acknowledged by raising his bowler hat.

"We had not sped half a mile when an incident occurred that threatened momentous consequences. A steam launch, putting off from the Italian man-of-war *Savoia*, bore right down upon our little craft of 60 tons. The course seemed so deliberately chosen that those on board the yacht, watching with increasing anxiety, expected every moment that the helm would be put up and collision avoided.

"As the launch held on her way, straight as an arrow to the mark, we to our horror discovered that the man at the helm was in the act of drinking from a bottle. Apparently no look-out was kept. Holding straight on her course, the steam launch smashed into the yacht. At the very last moment the man at the helm, having finished his bottle and being aroused to a

sense of danger by shouts from the yacht, shifted the helm. Thus when the blow was struck the launch was beginning to turn off, and so smote the yacht at an angle that avoided what a minute earlier seemed absolute destruction.

"I sat close to Mr. Gladstone during the terrible minutes. I am not sure that with his dimmed eyesight he realized the peril. He must have heard the shouting, and seen the rush of passengers to the side of the yacht, warning off the launch. If he understood he faced the peril without a sign of fear.

"The captain and engineer of the *Osprey* hurried below to inquire what damage had been done to our cockleshell of a hull. Strange to say, none was visible, the scraping of the paint of the bulwarks being the only token of the encounter. The Italian boat was seriously injured, her cutwater being wrenched to one side.

"The incident was observed from the *Savoia*, and the launch was smartly recalled."

"*In the North Sea, Sunday, June 23rd.*—On the whole yesterday was the most charming day of the voyage. We went from Kiel to Gottenberg, approaching the red-tiled town through a lovely fjord. The big steamer anchored about two miles from the town, and we proceeded thither in a tug. Mr. Gladstone happened to have a chair placed for him close to a bunk in which I sat. I never put myself in his way, and now took no notice of his arrival. He looked at me for a moment. Then he turned to Mrs. G. and I heard his deep voice saying: 'Isn't that Mr. Lucy?' She nodded, and turning to me with his face lighted up by the old smile he shook hands with much heartiness.



He told me in the course of a long conversation that he knew people now, not by their features, which he could not clearly see, but by their contour. I suggested that Armitstead was in that respect a very useful companion. No mistaking him when he loomed near. At which he deeply chuckled. Lord Peel paid a return visit to the *Tantallon* on Friday. We had a pleasant chat, in course of which he spoke very highly of Mr. Gully in the Speaker's Chair. I told Mr. G. this. He said P. had spoken to him to the same effect.

“‘And,’ he added, ‘though I don’t follow these things very closely now, I quite agree with him.’”

“Gottenburg is a charming town, with a lovely loch in front, behind a rich green country. At the hotel we had the best luncheon I ever sat down to—things dainty, new, perfectly cooked and served. Afterwards we went by special train to see a waterfall. This was not of itself worth the ninety miles’ journey involved. But the line trended through a beautiful country, along green pastures, by a shining river, past snug hamlets of wooden houses, stained a deep red that harmonized with the living green in which it was set.”

Mighty things happened in London during our brief voyage. On the morning of Saturday, June 22, there reached us at Gottenberg a telegram announcing the defeat of Lord Rosebery’s Government on the Cordite question. Arrived at Gravesend on the Monday morning, there were brought aboard newspapers hot from the press. Whilst every one fought for a copy, Mr. Gladstone, offered first choice from the precious bundle, looked a little bored. After a moment’s hesitation he selected the *Daily News*, tucked it under his arm, and walked off to his state cabin on deck. The news would

keep till he had settled down in his armchair by the table, on which were set his Danish dictionary and the book which with its assistance he was already able to read.

It was characteristic of him that in this his eighty-sixth year, bound on a voyage that would include a couple of days spent in Denmark, he set himself to learn the Danish tongue. It was no new development of energy. Writing to me under date Jan. 22, 1892, Sir Algernon West, his private secretary during a long term of Premiership, says—

“I have just returned from a fortnight’s visit to Mr. Gladstone at Biarritz, where I left him younger and stronger than all of us. The day I left he was going to take a lesson in Basque literature and history! Long may his vigour last.”

The last time I looked upon the mobile face, the stately figure, familiar in the multitudinous phases of a quarter of a century, was when, his last sea voyage finished, Mr. Gladstone drove homeward from Liverpool Street Station. Three years earlier had he passed through London when the City was throbbing in anticipation of a General Election his carriage would have been followed by an excited crowd, some cheering, others hooting as conscience and conviction dictated. Now as he moved along at slow pace, necessitated by the midday traffic, people on the pathways, recognizing the well-known face, stopped to regard him. “There’s Gladstone!” they said to each other, lifted their hats in salutation, and passed on.

There was driving through the crowded streets not the strenuous statesman round whose banner for fifty

years the turmoil of political warfare had raged. It was only his ghost, a wraith that had nothing to do with contests at the poll, with majorities in the country or in the House of Commons.

One of the last letters Mr. Gladstone wrote from Downing Street had reference to the position taken up by the *Daily News* on the Home Rule question, described in an earlier chapter.

“10, DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL,  
“March 5, '94.

“DEAR MR. LUCY,—Though under very great pressure I must thank you for your kind letter.

“I must *add* a word to your statement of the solitude in which the *Daily News* took and gallantly maintained its post. I remember a day on which the *Pall Mall Gazette*, under its clever but erratic editor, published an object lesson of the field of battle on the Irish question. On one side were *D.N.* and *P.M.G.*—on the other the rest. I took my *P.M.G.*, drew a noose round the fighting figure, and with a long line at the end of it, carried it over to the other side, and by this verifying process placed the support of the *P.M.G.* at its true value, and left *D.N.* occupying absolutely alone its place of honour. I hope my account is intelligible.

“I remain faithfully yours,

“W. E. GLADSTONE.”

A page of Toby, M.P.'s Diary appearing in *Punch* the week after Mr. Gladstone's death thus concluded :  
“At the time of his second retirement the weight of twenty years was added to the burden of his prodigious labours. His mind was as bright, his intellect as keen

as ever. But the flesh truly was weak. So he came not any more, and the House of Commons is poorer through all time to come by the loss of his illuminating presence.

"*Business done*—Mr. Gladstone's.

" 'Thou thy worldly task hast done,  
Home art gone and ta'en thy wages.' "

*From Sir George Trevelyan.*

"WELCOMBE, STRATFORD-ON-AVON,  
"May 25, 1898.

"DEAR LUCY,

"On page 252 of this week's *Punch*, column 2, line 12 from bottom, you will find what to me (as a reader of the 'Essence of Parliament' ever since the first month of 1881,) is the most moving touch of everything which has been written since Thursday last.

"Ever yours truly,

"G. O. TREVELYAN."



## XXXI

### A SCAPE-GOAT OF THE BOER WAR

I MET Henry Colvile in January, 1884. Mrs. Lucy and I were returning from our journey round the world. Colvile had completed a survey of the Arbain Road in the Libyan Desert, through which there was some talk of making a railway. He joined the ship at Suez, and, sitting opposite each other at the dinner-table, we speedily became friends. He was, I fancy, one of the earliest users of the Kodak. I still possess a number of photographs, snapshots taken by him on his interesting ride through lands unknown.

He was, with individual differences, the same type of man as Fred Burnaby. The two shared in common a passion for seeking danger in the car of a balloon. Whilst still a captain in the Grenadiers Colvile married his first wife. It occurred to him that it would be an agreeable thing, instead of going off after their wedding on a home or foreign tour, to start on a honeymoon in a balloon. The bride consenting, the happy couple drove from the church door to the place where Colvile's balloon was inflated with gas, and had a most successful trip.

A hard worker, a born soldier, a man of dauntless courage, his promotion was steady. The outbreak of the Boer War found him at Gibraltar, in command of the Infantry Brigade. He urgently applied for an

appointment at the seat of war, and Lord Roberts, knowing his man, gave him command of the Ninth Division. Here seemed an opening that might lead him into the front rank of British generals. It proved to be a chasm that engulfed fame and fortune.

Having been five times honourably mentioned in despatches from the field of battle, his name became ominously familiar to the British public by a succession of disasters. A force of mounted men and guns, under command of Colonel Broadwood, riding towards Bloemfontein were ambushed at Sanna's Post by the Boers under De Wet and thoroughly routed. Colvile was under orders to advance from Bloemfontein and reinforce them. He came near enough to hear the guns. But, according to the charge brought against him, he was content to make a slow flanking movement, and the Boers were left undisturbed in their victory.

Some months later, Colvile, in command of the Highland Brigade, was moving towards Heilbron. A force of 500 Yeomanry had been sent to join him at Lindley. On their arrival they found he had passed through. Halting for a day with intention to follow on his track, they were attacked by the ubiquitous De Wet, and after hard fighting surrendered. The charge brought against Colvile in this case was that, disregarding the cry for help from the Yeomanry, he continued his march.

Citation of these facts is necessary for explanation of the subjoined letter, in which Colvile states his own case—

"9, WELLINGTON COURT, ALBERT GATE,  
"Jan. 19, 1901.

"DEAR LUCY,—I was placed on the retired list in

last night's *Gazette*, so now I imagine the W.O. and I are quits over the 'insubordination.' I sinned and have been punished, and am now free to peg away at the old question of my conduct in South Africa. I hear they say the fact of the telegram being a forgery is unimportant, and I should not be surprised if they find that the whole Yeomanry incident is unimportant too, and fall back on Sanna's Post. I believe I have an even better case over that than on Lindley.

"It must always be a matter of opinion whether I should have turned back to help the Yeomanry or not; but Sanna's Post can be reduced to a question of hard fact. Would it have been possible under any circumstances (starting from Bloemfontein at the time ordered) for me to recapture Broadwood's guns? I say 'No.' Of course they will say 'Yes,' and if there is an inquiry we shall both produce our evidence.

"There has been some rather shady work over my retirement. But I do not want to argue about that, as I look upon the charge of insubordination as only a red herring intended to take the scent off the main issue.

"I return to Lightwater on Monday, but could meet you any day, if there is anything you would like to know.

"Yours sincerely,  
"H. E. COLVILLE."

The insubordination to which he alludes, which led to his being placed on the retired list, was a statement made by him to a newspaper representative on his return to England.

After the Lindley incident he was relieved of his command in South Africa, but was permitted to return

to the high military position formerly occupied by him at Gibraltar. Fortune, pursuing him with relentless malignity, stabbed him afresh. Hardly had he settled down in his old quarters when a curt command from the War Office practically dismissed him from the service. He came home a broken man, and never regained opportunity of rejoining the service he loved. He looked me up in London, and, finding I was in the country, posted off to Hythe, bringing his maps and memoranda with him. I recall his figure as he knelt on my study floor with the map spread out before him demonstrating the sheer impossibility of his men setting out from Bloemfontein at the time ordered, arriving at Sanna's Post in time to recapture Broadwood's guns.

His last tragedy brought him the relief of death. Riding, according to his wont, at top-speed on a motor-bicycle, he came into collision with a motor-car driven by an old friend and sometime comrade. When the lights were turned on the prostrate body it was found that Henry Colvile's troubles in this world were over.



## XXXII

“C.-B.”

AT three historic epochs falling within my personal observation politicians at head-quarters, voicing opinion prevalent at the moment in London society, have grievously erred. The first dates back to 1873, when it was generally agreed that, by declining the Premiership pressed upon his acceptance after the resignation of Gladstone, Disraeli lost his final opportunity. The second was when Gladstone's departure for Midlothian in the spring of 1880 was regarded as a forlorn hope as far as it concerned his chances of again becoming Premier. The third was when the claims of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman to succession to the Liberal Premiership were, in the closing years of his leadership of the Opposition, thought scarcely worth discussing.

As history records, Disraeli in 1874 triumphed over the deeply rooted prejudices of the Tory Party, disarmed the long-cherished distrust of his sovereign, and became the most powerful Premier since the days of Pitt. Gladstone came back to power in 1880 to commence not the least striking or important chapter of his marvellous career. Within a few months of his accession to the highest office open to a Commoner, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman became the most popular

Leader of the House since Palmerston sat on the Treasury Bench, his too-early death being mourned with unfeigned sorrow in both political camps.

The difference in the position of Campbell-Bannerman as Leader of the Opposition and that almost immediately conceded to him as Premier can be fully realised only by daily witnesses of scenes in the House of Commons during successive phases of his career. The party fealty, in many cases ripening into personal affection, displayed towards him during his brief Premiership, finds parallel only in the insubordination and habitual slighting that fretted him while he sat on the other side of the Table. A man constitutionally disposed to scholarly indolence, he at the call of duty came to the help of the Liberal Party when sections of it had worried Sir William Harcourt into resignation. His view of the situation is cheerily indicated in the following letter, written on acceptance of the Leadership in succession to Sir William Harcourt:—

“BELMONT CASTLE, MEIGLE, SCOTLAND,

“*January 15, 1899.*

“MY DEAR LUCY,—Very many thanks for your letter and for your flattersome encyclical. You are always too kindly, and do not keep so strictly to the truth as we higher principled politicians do.

“Seriously, however, I am overwhelmed by the friendliness of the public generally and the party in particular. As to my immediate colleagues, nothing could be more urgent and instant than their expression of desire for me to take the foremost place—and I really could not have entertained the idea had it not been for their solidarity.

“Can it be that we have for some time had an

element warring against this necessary solidarity among us? Can there be some sensation of relief that—but no; why waste time on such an impossible conjecture?

"If it comes, then, we must make the best of it, whether we like it or not, and I can answer for one who does not like it.

"In the mean time the thought uppermost with me is, how nice it would be to be at Hythe! We have had an odious winter in Caledonia, every day different from, and worse than, its predecessor. You have been all this time favoured by the light breezes of the balmy South. How we envy you. I presume you constantly make the run over from Dover to Calais, laying up a stock of health for the stale and stuffy Lobby.

"We shall soon meet, I dare say, and I hope that whatever changes supervene (that is, I think, a good Press word) you will always find me

"Yours very truly,

"H. C.-B."

Within a period of twelve months things had grown so bad that a second meeting of the Liberal Party at the Reform Club was summoned, to hear the declaration that if matters did not mend, a new Leader must be sought.

Towards the close of the Session of 1899 I took the opportunity in a weekly article which had much vogue in Parliamentary circles, to write a few plain words on the situation. It brought me a letter of which the following are such extracts as may be printed at this date.

"MARIENBAD, August 13, '99.

"MY DEAR LUCY,—I am greatly obliged to you :

"(a) For your writing in the *Observer*.

"(b) For sending it to me.

"(c) For your letter.

"(d) For enclosing your riposte to ———.

"I do not foam and fret about it quite so much as you do, though I wince internally. . . . I blame rather the decent, quiet, well-disposed rank and file who do not see the harm they are doing in following unruly courses.

"Also, the whipping might be more strenuous. But after all there are two theories. One is that there should always be the observance of discipline; the other is that it is better not to be always cracking the whip, but rather to let them have their fling on immaterial things so long as they go straight on the bigger questions. We shall see.

"Here we are. . . . No M.Ps. as yet and only two Lords; thus no society for you. Stick to Hythe, therefore. . . .

"What a drama at Rennes and Paris! We have seen nothing like it for thrilling interest in our time.

"Remember me to your wife. We are both pretty well and recovered from a terrible hot journey out.

"Yours,

"H. C.-B."

The drama alluded to was the second trial of Dreyfus.

The fragment reveals the genial, lofty character of the writer. He was daily wounded in the house of a



friend. Having sacrificed treasured ease to the services of the party, having no axe to grind on his own account, rich, popular, a man of simplest, most wholesome tastes, he had, there being no one else acceptable for the sacrifice, loyally given up all. His reward was revolt in his own ranks, an attitude of hostility, curiously mixed with contempt, on the part of gentlemen opposite. Yet he makes no complaint, indulges in no recrimination.

When, a little more than five years later, he became First Minister of the Crown, dispenser of honours, he, doubtless with his genial smile, tossed a title to one of the men who had been foremost in organising the petty revolts among a wing of the Liberal Party that weakened the hands of its nominal Leader and gave the enemy occasion to blaspheme. The prize was probably acquired by the practice successful in the case of the importunate widow. But how many are there who would have displayed the magnanimity of Campbell-Bannerman towards a former foe, whom it certainly was not worth while to buy over?

It was this caballing behind the scenes among sections of his own following that accounted for the comparative failure of Campbell-Bannerman as Leader of the Opposition. If, as was rudely made apparent, he did not command the confidence of his own following, how could he hope to win the respect of the adversary? It was certainly not forthcoming. There were some painful scenes in the closing Sessions of what was known as the Khaki Parliament. When Campbell-Bannerman addressed the House, members who crowded the benches to hear Mr. Asquith speak ostentatiously withdrew. Mr. Balfour, with rare variance from constitutional habit of chivalrous

courtesy, did not hesitate to sneer at his later habit of reading his speeches from MS. Mr. Chamberlain, following him in debate, harped on the same string. Had this method of attack been resented by swift outburst of angry protest from the Liberals it would have been endurable. Bitterest ingredient in the cup was that the assailants were unrebuked.

Campbell-Bannerman bore this discipline so uncomplainingly—wincing internally as he admits, but too proud to show the wound—that it must have been something of a revelation to his colleagues on the Front Bench when, the result of the General Election of 1906 declared, they found him resolved not only to take the Premiership, but to be master in his Cabinet household. The fact, discerned by his clear sight, was that he was the elect of the people. While the House of Commons as a whole underestimated his capacity, there was nothing approaching the enthusiasm among Liberal members that at repeated crises sustained the predominance of Gladstone. London misunderstood and belittled him. The Provinces, having the advantage of perspective, saw him in a truer light, and were determined to have none other as Premier. Some of his colleagues on the Front Bench, solicitous for his health and comfort, wanted to shelve him in the restful obscurity of the House of Lords. It was no secret at the time that one whose collaboration in the Ministry was almost indispensable, for some days refused to take office if Campbell-Bannerman continued to lead the party in the Commons. C.-B. plodded along, smiling, courteous, but implacable. In the end he got his way, and lived long enough to establish a rarely equalled position as Leader, not only of his party, but of the House of Commons.

It was while he was Leader of the Opposition he wrote the subjoined letter, correcting a blunder into which I had fallen in sketching one of my "Pictures in Parliament" for the *Daily News*.

"6, GROSVENOR PLACE, S.W.

"February 12, '96.

"MY DEAR LUCY,—That I should be able to catch you out! I thought you knew everything about Parliamentary practices.

"You speak of me as 'forgetting' to take my hat off when the Speaker read the Speech. On the contrary, I kept it on purposely, maintaining the traditional rule of the House, which has always been that members uncover to hear a direct message from the Queen, but never to hear a message read at second-hand from the Chair.

"When I first came into the House this distinction was universally observed. It was observed to the end by Northcote, Lowe, Mr. G., Hartington, and all the *vieille école*. If I am the last survivor of the true faith and practice, I am proud of the fact.

"It is not worth taking notice of, and please don't correct or alter anything. But if you see me on another occasion with my hat on, remember it is high principle and not slackness.

"As I said, I am 'real glad' to catch *you* out.

"Yours,

"H. C.-B."

Here is another specimen of his light touch when he took pen in hand.

“HOUSE OF COMMONS,

“*July 1.*

“MY DEAR LUCY,—When I was a freshman at Trinity I went one Sunday to Church. When I entered the door I found the sermon going on, and a very dandified and vapourish Fellow of my College in the pulpit. With much sign of woe he was exclaiming, ‘Alas, my brethren; alas! and thrice alas!’ I was so touched that I did not sample the sermon any longer, but came away.

“These lamentable words are still ringing in my ear as I take up my pen to say that vaccination is not exhausted. Hercules in the form of Mr. Chaplin has been struggling with the python, whose heads all come from the Midland counties. He chops away at them, but as he chops they grow. Probably if he whistled softly to them, and gave them something nice to nibble at, in the shape, say, of a conscientious objector, he would have scotched the beast by this time. But his ways are not as our ways.

“So I am afraid I am shut out from your charming luncheon party on Tuesday: I shall be shouting ‘Order, order,’ instead of eating and drinking. Pray make my apologies to your wife, and if you could convey delicately to Mrs. Craigie how sorry I am not to meet her again, you would be the friend you always are to

“Yours very truly,

“H. C.-B.”

The Mrs. Craigie alluded to was “John Oliver Hobbes,” whom he had met at our house some time before, and with whom he, in common with mankind, was greatly charmed.



In the spring of 1904 Sir James Knowles, editor of the *Nineteenth Century*, perceiving close approach of the downfall of the Unionist Ministry, asked me to draft a Liberal Cabinet for publication in the pages of his Review. In an evil moment I undertook a delicate, as it turned out, a disastrous task. The forecast, appearing at a dull season, was widely quoted and keenly commented upon. It cost me one valued friendship and for awhile imperilled another. In the first case the *Nineteenth Century* assigned to a certain M.P. one of the highest and most honourable offices connected with an incoming Ministry. It was not, however, the one upon which my old friend had set his heart, and the indiscretion proved to be the unpardonable sin. Shortly after the appearance of the article, I met him at a memorable dinner given by Lawson Walton, at which there were gathered nearly every one of the leading men of the Liberal Party, who—including the host—eventually became members of the Campbell-Bannerman Ministry. Instead of the hearty greeting with which I had been familiar for a dozen years, I was (in a Parliamentary sense of course) slain by a cold stare and a slight nod.

I searched my heart for trace of guile or disloyalty towards one whose friendship was based upon a too-generous appreciation of encouragement publicly given to him, when he, a new member, was endeavouring to make his way in the House of Commons. There was absolutely none, and I remained in pained puzzlement till I recalled the hapless article. I am not much good in these unfamiliar circumstances, being indisposed to clutch at the suddenly chilled hand of ancient friendship. Accordingly "we walk apart." A particularly foolish "river flows between." When, as sometimes

happens, we meet under hospitable auspices my old friend and I do not know each other.

In this same article, mindful of the long claims of Earl Spencer, I nominated him for the Premiership, suggesting Campbell-Bannerman as Secretary of State for War with a seat in the House of Lords. Here is clearly seen the under-estimation of his capacity, on an earlier page lamented on the part of the House of Commons generally. The freezing consequences were less complete than in the case of the other offended friend. But the chill was unmistakable. It was characteristic of Campbell-Bannerman's gentleness of nature that when we chanced to foregather at any of the social festivities of the Session, he was effusively friendly in his bearing towards Mrs. Lucy, while a formal shake of the hand was my full measure of greeting.

When he was smitten with illness and the approaching end seemed not afar off, I resolved to come to an understanding with him on the subject. I wrote recalling old days, and asking him plainly to declare wherein and whereby I had sacrificed a long-prized friendship. He replied—

“HOTEL CONTINENTAL, BIARRITZ,

“*Jan. 15, 1908.*

“MY DEAR LUCY,—Your friendly letter gave me much pleasure. . . . I can at once relieve your mind of any idea that anything has been done by you to give offence to me in the slightest; nor am I conscious of any difference in my attitude; but, of course, opportunities of friendly relationship are more frequent among those who are completely in political accord.

"I have never varied in my regard for yourself and the personage whom you call your rural secretary [Mrs. Lucy]. Please remember me most kindly to her, and

"Believe me

"Yours very truly,

"H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN."

## XXXIII

### OUR DOGS

THE first was Laddie, a Tyneside collie, the gift of Joseph Cowen. He was a winning, graceful creature with one ineradicable fault. Some human beings are servile to dram-drinking, Laddie was a slave to tram-following. We lived in Brixton Road in those days. Up and down the broad thoroughfare flowed an interminable stream of horsed-trams going north and south. Laddie didn't care in which direction they might be moving; he was straightway on their trail.

I well remember a Sunday afternoon a considerable portion of which I spent in pursuit of Laddie. The memory is the more acute since the chase opened about luncheon-time. He set off towards town, barking furiously, in pursuit of a tram. I followed on its immediate successor and came up within touch of him at Kennington Park, where trams halted for awhile. Doubling at sight of me, he went off southward at the hinder wheels of another tram, I following him at the expense of a second twopence. As parallel lines never meet, so tram-cars, started at due intervals of time, do not overtake each other. As soon as I arrived at the next stopping-place, Laddie was travelling townward again on a fresh pursuit. I forget how long the game lasted. Its continuance was not conducive to



that placid praiseful frame of mind that should accompany the drawing out of a Sabbath afternoon.

Taking him on week-end visits to the country, he developed a fresh gift. I do not know whether in his native Newcastle-on-Tyne, he had ever seen a sheep. In the country he discerned one at an incredible distance, and was off *ventre à terre* in instant pursuit. Farmers and dairymen have a prejudice against this sort of thing. I got into such constant trouble that, taking it and the trams together, it was with feelings of modified regret that, Laddie's life early closing, we buried him under an apple tree in the back garden.

Then came a Scotch collie of bigger, lustier breed. His handsome black-and-white skin, touched on the fore paws and the lower part of the face with golden brown, hangs over a chair in the room where I write. His weakness was for rabbits. Nosing one, or seeing a white fluff bobbing in a thicket, he was off like an arrow from a bow, his hapless master or mistress seeing nothing of him till he had got the business thoroughly out of hand. It was, as I discovered after a two-hours' patient vigil, no use waiting in the hope that he would come back on his tracks. Fortunately he had a wonderful sense of locality, never failing to turn up some time in the course of the afternoon or evening exceedingly thirsty. He dwelt in a kennel by the kitchen door, and had a disengaging habit when loosed to be taken for a walk of bounding over the lawn and flower beds, dragging a long iron chain that cut off the choicest blooms. Of all our dogs he was the least alluring. When he went on his last rabbit hunt we decided we would have no more big dogs.

Our next friend was a white terrier, interesting chiefly by reason of the personality of his breeder.

He was Mr. Howell, sometime secretary to Ruskin, a man well known in artistic circles thirty years ago. I made his acquaintance at the table of Henry Doetsch, of Rio Tinto mine fame, of whom I have written in connection with Fred Burnaby. Doetsch had a great ambition to found a picture gallery in which there should be nothing but gems wrought by the hands of the Old Masters. Howell was the very man for him. He had an almost preternatural gift of happening upon unrecognised or forgotten pictures by Raffael, Rubens, Murillo, Rembrandt, and the like. He brought the news to Doetsch, who straightway drew a cheque for the amount demanded—astonishingly reasonable as compared with the current market price of the master's work.

One night, Du Maurier was dining at New Burlington Street, and having done justice to a bottle of claret from Doetsch's cellar of rare wines (there was no mistake about these), hinted doubt as to the authenticity of the masterpieces. Never again did he sit at Doetsch's table. But he lived long enough to learn the result of the sale at Christie's of the treasured collection. Picture after picture was knocked down at prices little exceeding the cost of the frame.

Howell was a wonderful man, cultured in art and literature. He had travelled far, and was conversant with most European languages. He did me the honour of always arranging to sit next to me at Doetsch's frequent dinners. I was fascinated by his strange personality and his brilliant talk. He once confided to me a secret not elsewhere known, I think, among his London acquaintances. He was a widower with one daughter, who dwelt in a cottage some twenty miles out of London. Every week he quitted the

gaieties and attractions of town to spend Saturday to Monday with her. Incidentally he nurtured a breed of terriers. It was one of these he pressed on my acceptance, bringing it down in his arms to Charing Cross Station to see us off to Hythe.

I regret to say the dog displayed more of the unreliability of his breeder's business life than of the simplicity and integrity of the sylvan home in the country. He early displayed an ineradicable roving habit. A man who lived up Lympne way batted upon me for weeks by winning rewards for finding Toto and bringing him home. Early one morning, after two days' absence, Toto brought himself home covered with paste, apparently acquired by immersion in a bill-sticker's bucket. This led to a coolness between us, and when next he was "found" in the neighbourhood of Lympne and brought home with expectancy on the part of his escort of another half-crown, I declined to take him in.

After this we went back to the collie. My sister, visiting in Scotland, tempted a shepherd by proffer of a five-pound note to part with his dog. On his arrival, Glen instantly established himself in the affections of the family, and when, after a fortnight's separation, the shepherd wrote proffering the return of the banknote and asking for his dog again, he was gently but firmly rebuffed. Glen was as good as he was handsome, in this case the superlative form of assertion. He had no vices, and indulged in only one escapade. This happened on the morning after his arrival at his country quarters. In the front window of the dining-room is a large sheet of plate glass, looking on to the lawn and the sea beyond. Where Glen had hitherto lived plate glass was unknown. He thought he was faced by the

ambient air, and, bored with unwonted confinement, he jumped clean through the glass, in some miraculous way escaping hurt. Observing some sheep in a neighbouring field, he gently but effectually shepherded them, trotting home afterwards with the satisfaction a Scotch dog feels at having gone through a satisfactory Sunday morning service. Glen died whilst we were in the West Indies. His grave is in the orchard, and his memory is kept as green as the grass that covers it.

Glen lived long enough to make the acquaintance of Toots, a privilege highly prized. Her family stock is planted in Pomerania, she being of the breed commonly known as Spitz. She was a present from Sir Donald Macfarlane, sometime Member for Carlow. He kept a kennel of the dogs, but unfortunately did not keep them in the kennel. They ran about wherever their master might be, untrained and absolutely unrestrained. My pleasure in yachting with Sir Donald, whether on the Mediterranean or the west coast of Scotland, was modified by the circumstance that every morning as I crossed the deck to the bathroom, I had half a dozen dogs yelping at my heels. In the narrower accommodation of a town dining-room the nuisance was aggravated. The dogs cultivated a pleasing habit of lying under the table whilst the meal was in progress and chewing the ends of any especially choice shoes that might be about. When they grew quite unbearable, Macfarlane produced a carter's whip with which he upbraided them. As this was not without danger to the lookers-on, we preferred to suffer the dogs uncomplainingly.

Toots was a town dog, whilst Glen remained on guard in country quarters. It was pretty to see his bearing towards her when her ladyship went down to



take the air at the week end. Whene'er she took her walks abroad, her feminine charms attracted a string of admirers. Glen did not mind that. But if any dog presumed to approach Toots within touch, he bounded on to the scene, edging himself in between the intruder and the young lady committed to his charge. He didn't want to fight; but by Jingo if he did! He stood there with head half turned aside as if it was of no consequence, but a flashing eye was kept on the intruder, who usually found it expedient to trot off elsewhere.

Toots dwelt with us for fourteen years—a long life for a dog, especially for one burdened with the cares of her own household and the supervision of the immediate neighbourhood of a town and country residence. The first time I was attracted by her strong individuality was on a Sunday morning shortly after her arrival on the scene. Her mistress had gone to church. I, with a guest, set forth to walk round by the sea to pick up a newspaper at the railway junction. Having walked at speed for more than five minutes, I chanced to look round, and, behold, there was a fluffy little black thing, the size of a mole, pegging along. It was Toots. Finding every one had gone out, she concluded it was the proper thing to do, and followed me, briskly bustling along the full three-mile round.

She was then six weeks old. In later years, including her last trot round, she regularly made this Sabbath pilgrimage. As a rule she treated me with polite but obvious sufferance. Her affection, passionate in its warmth, unfailing in faithfulness, was centred on her mistress. I seemed to be settled down in the house, and had to be put up with. On Sunday morning circumstances (as they do sometimes) altered the

case. From our earliest greeting Toots lavished friendly attention on me. If after breakfast I walked upstairs, she was at my heels. If I lingered in the dressing-room, she looked in from time to time to see how I was getting on.

How through the diurnal revolution of the earth did the dog know that Sunday had again come round, and with it the prospect of a walk by the sea through the wood to Sandling Junction? A similar instinct was displayed on Saturdays. Generally we week-ended in our cottage by the sea, but occasionally went on a visit farther afield. By a simple process of observation and deduction Toots infallibly knew the settled plan for a current Saturday. If there were simple packing of hand-bags and wraps, she knew we were going home and that she would accompany us. Accordingly she sat content, on guard in the hall by way of precaution against being overlooked in the hurry of departure. If the packing were on larger scale, travelling-trunks being brought into requisition for a Saturday-to-Monday or longer visit, she knew her fate. Tears filled her big dark eyes as she watched the process. She neither complained nor remonstrated, resigned to a fate acknowledged to be unconquerable.

Another even more remarkable evidence of prescience was of daily occurrence. Putting my foot in the lift at Ashley Gardens on returning home after a few hours' absence, I heard Toots's shrill bark welcome me from the hall five stories nearer heaven. Lying on the sofa in the dining-room, she leaped up when the lift began to move with me in it, rushed to the door, out into the hall, barking furiously. There would be nothing strange in this if it happened whenever the lift sounded its approach. Probably during my absence

the lift would have run up and down half a hundred times without evoking movement or sound from her. She never failed to recognise my arrival on the level of the passage five stories down. The sense of smell is peculiarly acute with dogs, of common use in assisting them to recognise friends. It seemed impossible in the circumstances here described that Toots was so assisted.

Toots was not free from the infirmity that handicaps her race. She was unfailing in the habit of greeting visitors with shrill, angry, incessant bark. We minimised this nuisance by an act of guile. When visitors were expected Toots was relegated to a distant room. The company complete, she was permitted to enter, which she did in reposeful manner that left nothing to be desired. Thank Heaven, she had no responsibility in the matter. If, on the dispersal of the company, an umbrella was not, or spoons were missing, the blame lay with those who had allowed these people to enter without protest. —

Antipathy, early displayed, was directed towards the regulations of the Army and Navy Stores that dogs must be left outside in charge of a stout official. Accompanying her mistress on a morning visit to the Stores, Toots, emerging on Victoria Street, always pressed on the lead to get to the other side of the road, remote from the hated steps. One day, it being wet, her mistress, wrapping her up in a light shawl, ventured to carry her through the various departments in the Stores where shopping was done. This was a peculiarly dangerous experiment, since Toots had little faith in strange men, or women either, and was prompt to express suspicion by a sharp, shrill bark. The circumstances were, however, explained to her, it being

made clear that if discovery followed she would thereafter always have to be left on the steps in custody of the stout gentleman in blue coat and brass buttons. A compromise was effected whereby, the shawl being partly left open, Toots, herself unseen, might from its recesses note everything that was going on. That done, she was content, remaining mum as a mouse. On later visits, on coming within sight of the Stores, she stopped, pulled at her mistress's gown, looking up with mute demand to be taken up and hidden away. At the Auxiliary Stores, close by, the rule about dogs is not so severe. A constant visitor, Toots was known and petted by the assistants, male and female. Approaching the Auxiliary Stores she never waited to be hidden away, bounding up the steps. But she knew that, whilst not necessarily hidden in a wrap, she must be carried in her mistress's arms; she ever waited on the top steps to be taken up.

To her last day Toots preserved a grateful remembrance of the Duke of Argyll—a regard, I have reason to know, cordially returned. It happened on a day that his grace was to have formed one of a luncheon party at Ashley Gardens which, all told, should have numbered fourteen. At the last moment, detained by public business, he found himself unable to keep the engagement. Awaiting receipt of a telegram notifying the calamity, there was his empty chair. A lady novelist,\* the phenomenal circulation of whose books might have been counted on to deliver her from the frailty, was painfully moved at the prospect of being seated at a meal one of thirteen. The situation was awkward, since luncheon was actually being served and there was no time to engage

\* Miss Marie Corelli.



a man from Blankley's. A happy thought occurred to the hostess. Toots was sent for, installed in the empty chair, and with extreme appreciation took her share of successive courses. There were fourteen at table and all was well.

To-day Toots sleeps under a daisied sod close by a rose-bed at which in times past she often sat wondering what her mistress, pottering round the trees, pruning scissors in hand, was wasting her time about. Her face is turned towards the sunlight and the sea—

“Her part in all the pomp that fills,  
The circuit of the summer hills  
Is that her grave is green.”

With due variation, Pippin resembled Tom Bowling, inasmuch as his form was of the manliest beauty. Perfect in shape, with bright, intelligent face, and a long-haired coat of silkiest black, he was a delight to the eye. He came after the death of Toots, and was intended to console her mistress under what seemed irreparable loss. Two ladies, moved by the same kind impulse, almost simultaneously sent a successor. One was a Pekinese, bought at a fabulous price from its noble breeder. Pip, like Toots, was a Pomeranian, and coming first, where there was room only for one, made it necessary to return the gift of the gracious lady who proffered the Chinaman.

Of princely lineage, Pip was an aristocrat from his glossy head to the nails of his tufted toes. His notions on the question of territorial privileges were extreme. He denied the right of any one outside the household to walk up or down the public lane leading to the garden gate. A sudden rush, a fierce bark reminded intruders of their indiscretion. Things were worse

inside the garden. Small boys passing speedily discovered the delight of rapping at the fence, with the certainty of bringing Pip raging in remonstrance. They playfully broke off the lower part of one of the staves of the fence. This suited Pip literally down to the ground. He would sit by the hour at the aperture with ears cocked up waiting for some one to pass on the other side, startling them with sudden outburst of angry barking. Even more hotly resented was the liberty taken by the tradesmen's carts passing along the roadway at the top of the orchard. At distant sound of their approach, Pip was on the alert. Some dogs of less intelligence would have run forward to meet them. Pip knew better. He set off by short cut in the direction they travelled, and before they had overtaken and passed him, he had enjoyed a long bout of remonstrance.

A charming companion, brimming over with fun and mischief, gaily glad he was alive, Pip's career was early cut short. Before he passed his second birthday, he caught distemper and died. His grave is only a few paces off that in which Toots sleeps, both in full view of Glen's last home.

"They say the lion and the lizard keep  
The courts where Jamshyd gloried and drank deep;  
And Bahram, that great hunter—the wild ass,  
Stamps o'er his head, and he lies fast asleep."

So, through the summer and winter days the carts rattle past the fence within sound of Pip's resting-place, and he lies silent and still.

### XXXIV

#### THE OBSERVER AND THE STRAND MAGAZINE

LOOKING back on the period of my slavery on *Mayfair* I have vivid recollection of walking along the Strand to catch a humble 'bus at Charing Cross and seeing the Saturday night crowds hanging round the theatre doors in anticipation of a pleasant evening. There was some feeling of envy at the varied circumstance between theatre-goers and myself. But I do not remember ever asking myself whether life was worth living in the groove I had voluntarily chosen. There it was. I had undertaken a task and I just went on with it, plodding away through two long years, working like a galley slave, not earning money, steadily, uninterruptedly, losing it. Dear Joe Cowen never by sign or word made my lot harder by complaint. When fresh cheques were wanted to pay the printer or the literary staff his share was promptly forthcoming.

On the whole I do not regret that I went through this particular mill. It was excellent discipline, though I admit, if the boon were offered me again, I should be so unselfish as to desire that another should profit by the opportunity.

*Mayfair* certainly advanced my professional position. The public would not have it, even though I allured them by the then novel attraction of pen-and-ink sketches illustrating the text. But it was sought at

the clubs and was much in favour in editorial rooms in the country.

In 1880 Edward Dicey, then editor of the *Sunday Observer*, came to me with the proposal to write a Parliamentary article for his paper. This meant sacrifice of Saturday mornings, only two years earlier rescued from the cruel clutch of *Mayfair*. I bargained for full freedom of judgment and perfect liberty of speech, conditions granted and honourably observed. For the space of twenty-nine years, save the interlude of my editorship of the *Daily News*, the "Cross Bench" article has been a familiar feature in the *Observer*, and has never been touched by the editorial pen. It was necessarily discontinued during my editorship of the *Daily News*. As in the case of my London Daily Letter, the writer was warmly welcomed back to his old quarters when the fetters of Bouverie Street were loosed.

One article in the long series described a memorable scene in the House of Commons. On April 8, 1892, Mr. Gladstone, following Mr. Chamberlain in debate, without note of preparation, fell upon his former colleague and belaboured him with effect the greater since the reprisal was free from the slightest display of brutal force. It was all rapier work. Description of the scene brought me one of the characteristic postcards begun at the very top, not necessarily with intent of filling up the space, but with careful provision of room if necessary. It is dated 1, Carlton Gardens, April 12, 1892, and runs thus: "One word of thanks, however hasty, for the brilliant article. It has but one fault, that of excess with reference to the merits of the principal subject of it.—W. E. GLADSTONE."

In the Session of 1890 I was a guest at one of the



many Parliamentary dinner-parties at which Seale Hayne hospitably provided opportunity for seeing his wonderful collection of Old Masters and tasting his excellent port. Later, on the formation of his fourth Administration, Mr. Gladstone, mindful of certain hospitalities provided by Seale Hayne in his Devonshire quarters, made him Paymaster-General, a Ministerial office distinguished by the fact that whilst it implies lavish distribution of money the incumbent himself receives no salary. Seale Hayne chiefly, if not exclusively, distinguished himself in office by a little incident happening outside Downing Street. During his brief term of Premiership Lord Rosebery revived the Greenwich dinner, intermitted under the austere rule of Mr. Gladstone. It was held at the close of the Session and was marked by the ebullition of spirits that accompanies the "break up" of other schools. On the withdrawal of the cloth Seale Hayne, known to possess a fine baritone voice, was invited to contribute a song to the harmony of the evening. Blushing he consented, and trolled forth "Down among the dead men."

The appropriateness of the ditty, questioned at first, on reflection became recognised. The Ministry, though not actually deceased, was hopelessly moribund. Before the following Session (1895) had sped half way the Paymaster-General and his colleagues were—as far as office was concerned—like the host of Sennacherib encamped before Jerusalem, "all dead corpses."

At Seale Hayne's table on this particular night I chanced to sit by Mr. George Newnes, his baronetcy still afar off. He was then known chiefly as the proprietor of a weekly paper called *Tit Bits*, which, hitting the public fancy, proved an immediate success. He

was full of a project for the starting of a new monthly magazine, to cost sixpence and be worth at least a shilling. He intimated a desire that when the new venture was started I should join the staff, contributing through the Session a Parliamentary article. I did not think anything more of the matter, not being, to tell the truth, attracted to the opening offered by a new enterprise when my hands were full of work for established papers, daily, weekly, and monthly. When the first issue of the *Strand Magazine* appeared and met with instant welcome from an appreciative public Newnes approached me with definite invitation to join the staff. In addition to the prejudice hinted at there was peculiar difficulty in fashioning the work. A daily, even weekly, paper is at sufficiently close range to keep touch with the current sittings of Parliament. Articles for the new magazine must be in the printer's hands at least four weeks before publication. (As the sale of the magazine went up by leaps and bounds it became necessary for my copy to be ready two months in advance.)

This condition of affairs made the project seem impracticable. Newnes, however, was not the man to have his plans frustrated by a negative. As he continued to press the proposal I invited him to lunch quietly with me at Ashley Gardens and talk the matter over. I had resolved to get out of the difficulty by demanding for the article what I thought would be a prohibitive price. I was so won over by Newnes's cheery confidence that we parted with the understanding that he was to make a definite offer for the series. When it reached me I found the proffered fee something in excess of what I had conceived to be a prohibitive price.

"From Behind the Speaker's Chair" established a record unique in magazine serials. Session after Session it ran uninterruptedly through ten years. With the exception of the Diary of Toby, M.P., in *Punch*, the articles brought me more friendly personal communications from unknown correspondents far and near than anything I ever wrote. The circulation of the *Strand*, enormous at home, extended to all parts of the world where the English race were settled. Going out to the Cape in 1894, the day of departure happened to coincide with the publication of the monthly number of the *Strand*. On the bookstall at Waterloo Station a heap was piled. Every other person in the special train was possessed of a copy. Among the ship's cargo was a bale of the magazine, and on the day after arrival I saw on the railway bookstall at Cape Town a pile nearly as high as the Waterloo Station consignment, diminishing with equal rapidity.

Shortly after arriving at Yokohama on a visit to Japan there entered my room a Japanese carrying under his arm a bulky volume. With many bows and much indrawing of the breath, indicative of profound humility in the presence of immeasurable superiority, the morning caller informed me that he was the editor and proprietor of a local *Punch*. Since copies were reproduced by a process akin to that of the ordinary office letter-look, the circulation must have been limited. The letterpress was adorned with abundant illustrations, some really comic. The volume he desired to lay at my feet, an offering from Japanese humorists to the unworthy representative of the Sage of Bouverie Street, London, was a bound copy of a year's weekly issue.

A parallel case affecting the *Strand Magazine*

happened during a later visit to the West Indies. Through the Post Office at Grenada I received from a correspondent in one of the smaller islands, the name of which I had never before heard, a sketch of the history of Grenada with a useful map. A letter accompanying the book explained that it was meant as a slight acknowledgment of the pleasure, spread over many years, derived from reading the Parliamentary sketches in the *Strand Magazine*.

When at the end of 1902 the series was discontinued a selection was issued in book form under the title "Peeps at Parliament." Its reception was so encouraging that two years later it was followed by "Later Peeps at Parliament." Both volumes were enriched by reproduction of the multitudinous sketches by F. C. G., to whose appearance in the magazine the popularity of the series was largely due.



## XXXV

### ON *PUNCH* STAFF

THE stages of my professional career may be traced as definitely and stated as tersely as was the identification of successive additions to the House that Jack built. "Men and Manner in Parliament," appearing in the *Gentleman's Magazine* through the Session of 1874, attracting the attention of Edmund Yates, led to my engagement on the *World*. The "Under the Clock" articles in the *World* suggested to Edward Dicey the idea of having something like them in the *Observer*. On resigning the editorship in 1889, Dicey wrote: "It will always be a source of pride to me to have published the 'Cross Bench' articles in the *Observer*."

The "Cross Bench" series, diligently read by Frank Burnand, induced him, as one of his first acts of authority when he became editor of *Punch*, to invite me to take up the work commenced by Shirley Brooks, just relinquished by Tom Taylor. Here is Burnand's first letter—

"LONDON, *September 11, 1880.*

"The 'Cross Benches' are *excellent*. I have watched them carefully. When you have five minutes to spare (not this week) I should like to have a chat if you will call in on me at 10, Bouverie Street, any Thursday (from 11 to 4)."

I was still writing the "Cross Bench" article in the *Observer*, and the difficulty of carrying on through successive weeks two commentaries on Parliamentary affairs that should be absolutely distinct in style and treatment seemed insuperable. That they were to run concurrently with "Pictures in Parliament," a prominent feature in the *Daily News*, was not embarrassing. That was a chronicle of current events; the others were free commentaries upon them.

Undismayed I undertook the new task. It happened that on the threshold it came near to being abandoned. "Essence of Parliament" was the title invented by Shirley Brooks when he commenced the new chapter in *Punch*. It was adopted by Tom Taylor when he succeeded to the editorship. Burnand proposed that it should be preserved. I confess I did not admire it *per se*. Moreover, intending to do the work in quite a different style from that necessarily adopted by Tom Taylor, who knew no more about Parliament than he gathered from the *Times* report, I wanted to get in a note of individuality. The possibility of this I found in the dog Toby on the peerless title-page, Mr. Punch's faithful but voiceless companion. To get Toby elected to the House of Commons, thence describing scenes he had actually witnessed, commenting on speeches he had heard, was the idea I had in my mind. This I communicated to F. C. B., who replied—

"WHITEFRIARS, LONDON, December 15, 1880.

"DEAR SIR,—Have decided that no better title can be found than the old one which all are accustomed to in *Punch*—'Essence of Parliament.' Now the question is Shall Toby go there as M.P., or as reporter to collect essence? Just turn this over. Sambourne has taken

instructions for his picture of interviewing Toby as M.P.

"However, let me know your views.

"'Essence' is settled.

"Qy., is Toby to go as M.P. (a pity to lose this)? But if so, in Preface we must say that he comes back every evening to 'report progress' to Mr. Punch, who returns him."

Burnand thus insisting on retaining the old title, I wrote—

"153, Brixton Road, S.W.,

"Wednesday night, December 15, 1880.

"MY DEAR SIR,—I very much regret the determination announced in your letter of this morning with respect to retaining the old title of the Parliamentary sketch in *Punch*. To tell the simple truth, it is one I could not write under. It would weigh me down like a tombstone.

"In the first place, it is not mine, nor yours, nor even *Punch's*. In the second place, it was, I think, an unfortunately stiff and pedantic title—smelling of the druggist's shop—which only the ability of Mr. Shirley Brooks made passable. Finally, while it moderately well suited the style of the day when he started the series it would be hopelessly heavy and commonplace now. Then a Parliamentary summary, or 'Essence of Parliament,' was a new thing. Now every daily paper has one, and *Punch* coming out once a week is from seven to ten days behind the fair. When you come to try and work the thing out, as is partly done in your note, see where we are landed. Fancy Toby going as a reporter to the House of Commons to collect 'Essence'!

"I should be exceedingly sorry to abandon on the threshold an enterprise in which the more I have thought of it during the past two months the more clearly I see an opportunity of making a great hit; but I should be doing myself an injustice and saddling you with a failure if I were to attempt to work on the lines suggested in your note to hand to-night."

"From F. C. Burnand, 10, Bouverie St., to H. W. Lucy.

"December 16, 1880.

"The difficulty will disappear: it may look a mountain but 'tis a molehill. The proprietors have such a very strong feeling on the subject of retaining the title 'Essence' merely as a heading that I am not prepared to fight for a small matter. And I do not think it will hamper you. At least it *mustn't*. Don't you bother your head about that; just settle it in your own way, and if B and A *insist* on the title being retained (they putting a certain proprietary value on it) I shall retain it, *but I shall take precious good care* to explain in my Preface that the *title only* is retained and not the thing. The new wine in the old bottle, and the sooner the bottle bursts the better. Don't let it alter your notion in the least."

"WHITEFRIARS, LONDON: December 17, 1880.

"DEAR SIR,—I should like to see you for a few moments here next Tuesday if convenient. It's all right. Dismiss the idea of Essence and being weighed down. We shall make a great hit of it.

"F. C. B."

The controversy was happily closed by adoption of a compromise whereby for twenty-nine years the title



has run "Essence of Parliament, Extracted from the Diary of Toby, M.P." When the first article appeared, Burnand, then and always generous of praise, wrote: "The 'go' of it is capital: the descriptions A1. Success! It's a very good beginning."

In course of time another character appeared on the stage. This was the Member for Sark, a personage who involved me in constant correspondence. Sir Frank Lockwood told me that one time, visiting the island of Sark, he was approached by an aged inhabitant with a copy of the *Pall Mall Gazette* Parliamentary Guide, published after the election of the 1885 Parliament. It contained portraits and biographies of all the members. The owner, learning that the Solicitor-General was in the island, thought here was opportunity of solving a difficulty long troubling him, and identifying the Member for Sark.

That was probably one of Lockwood's many inventions. Certainly the inquiries addressed to me at *Punch* Office grew so persistent that, in order to save time and trouble, I drafted a circular reply, and had it typewritten. "Toby, M.P., presents his compliments to —, and regrets to state that the identity of the Member for Sark being not entirely his own secret he is not at liberty to disclose it." The circular went in the ordinary course to a correspondent in far-off British Columbia. It brought the following shrewd rejoinder:

"84, FOURTH STREET, VICTORIA, B.C.: *September 26, '02.*

"Mrs. Brocklehurst presents her compliments to Toby, M.P., and thanks him for his very polite answer to her query *re* The Member for Sark. A new light has dawned on her, and she thinks that the Member for Sark exists only in Toby, M.P.'s imagination, or, in the

words of Betsy Prig, she 'don't believe there is no such person.' She hopes, however, that he will long continue to enliven the 'Essence of Parliament.' "

In October, 1908, the Hon. Secretary of the London Channel Islanders' Society wrote: "I am directed by my committee to ask you to honour us by becoming a Vice-President. As the Member for Sark we shall appreciate the honour very much."

To "Essence of Parliament" during part of the time of Shirley Brooks, through the full length of the editorship of Tom Taylor, Linley Sambourne contributed the adornment of beautiful initial letters, with occasional illustration on a larger scale. Burnand proposed that this arrangement should continue. I was delighted with the prospect if it were arranged that Sambourne should be on the spot and draw from life. That proved impracticable, to the loss of the House of Commons and the world generally. I had noticed in *Punch* from time to time sketches by an outsider, signed Hy. Furniss. Their humour suggested the very man for collaboration in the new departure contemplated on the Parliamentary page. Burnand, acceding to the suggestion, appointed Furniss to illustrate the Diary, making his drawings from the Lobby of the House of Commons or the Press Gallery. Furniss entered upon the task *con amore* and speedily made a hit, his work contributing greatly to the success of the new enterprise. When in 1894 he resigned his position on the staff, proposing to do something "on his own," he was succeeded by E. T. Reed, who in quite another style of work brilliantly succeeded in maintaining the artistic interest of the Parliamentary record.

It was one of Phil May's dearest wishes to illustrate

the Diary. With time and opportunity, he would have found in the two Houses of Parliament a rare field for his supreme genius. It happened in the early part of the Session of 1902, Reed being temporarily incapacitated by illness, I took Phil May down to the House, lent him my box in the Gallery, conducted him to the Lobby, and pointed out the celebrities. He drew several sketches, which duly appeared, notably, one of Mr. Chamberlain, seated on the Treasury Bench. They had all the charm of his marvellous art. But he was a little uncertain. After hunting all over the place for him one night I came back to the Gallery to find on my desk the following note:—

“MY DEAR LUCY,—Sorry I missed you. Just went upstairs for a few minutes. I am coming again to-morrow to lunch here. I think I can get better stuff by just wandering about, than from the Gallery, as my eyes are not very strong. I have two studies up to now—Lowther and Chamberlain.

“I wonder if it would be possible to get a Lobby ticket? It would make things easier, if this can be arranged, and you would not mind the trouble. I would be awfully pleased if it could be sent to me at the Devonshire Club.

“Sorry, must run off,

“Thine,

“PHIL MAY.”

That was the worst, the only bad, thing about dear Phil. He was always “just going upstairs,” or “round the corner for a few minutes.” I got him into the Lobby one night with intent to draw a sketch of Lord Hugh Cecil, at the time much to the fore. By good

luck we found him talking to another Member, an estimable but somewhat podgy-figured person, with rubicund countenance and abundant hair. I pointed out to May the tall, slight, stooping figure of Lord Hugh with his intellectual face.

"There's your man, Phil," I said, "you have a splendid chance."

In order not to distract his attention, I left him making mental notes of his subject, sketch books in the hands of artists being forbidden in the Lobby of the House of Commons. I did not see the result of his work till *Punch* came out the following week, when I discovered that, in the excitement of the moment, probably due to ambiguity in my direction, Phil had got hold of the wrong man, and the podgy person was presented, labelled "Lord Hugh Cecil."

On another occasion Phil, in more happy fashion, mixed up two quite different people. I must premise that his coal-black hair was treated in original fashion. It was plastered close to his head, flat over his forehead. When it wanted cutting a closely-fitting bowl was apparently placed over the crop, and the scissors run sharply under the edge. The result was rather the appearance of a smooth black shining cap, tightly fitted to the skull, than the ordinary head of hair. My hair, on the contrary, has a life-long constitutional habit of standing straight up, after the fashion of Mr. Traddles. One night, leaving the dinner-table in Bouverie Street and passing him by the way, I laid my hand on his head and said, "My dear Phil, why do you do your hair like that?"

He turned to regard me with one of his quaint smiles, but said nothing. Next week there appeared portrait sketches of Phil May with his hair bristling at



all points, and of me, with my rebellious locks plastered down in his peculiar style. The legend ran: *First Genius to Second Genius*: "Why on earth do you do your hair in that absurd fashion, Smith?"

The original drawing was on view at "Mr. Punch's Pageant" in the Leicester Galleries.

Phil May, in addition to being one of the finest black-and-white artists that have lived and worked since Charles Keene, was one of the most generous men that ever breathed. Whatever was his in the way of property was anybody else's who might chance to pass by and hold out his hand. At his various haunts—the Savage Club, Romano's, and elsewhere—he became the prey of thirsty idlers. He was always ready to "stand drinks" or ease himself of the costly cigars that on his entrance filled his pockets. It was the same with his work. A sketch by him, however casual, made the paper on which it was drawn as valuable as a banknote. If any one admired it, "Take it, my boy," was his swift response. "My boy" took it with such regularity as to threaten depletion of the artist's portfolio. Mrs. May, a shrewd little lady, formed a business habit that checked, though it never stopped, the practice. After one of his informal evenings at home, at which some who had not been invited frequently turned up, Mrs. May made mental notes of raids on the portfolio. The next morning she either wrote to or called upon the connoisseur with polite request for return of the sketch.

It happens that of the men who sat round Mr. Punch's old Mahogany Tree on the night I was admitted within the circle, only two are present at the current Wednesday dinners. One is Linley Sambourne, who enjoys the unique distinction of having served under

every editor since *Punch* was founded. Mark Lemon discovered his talent, and Shirley Brooks encouraged it by placing him on the regular staff, where he worked under Tom Taylor, Burnand, and now with Owen Sea-man in the editorial chair. The other relic from those distant days is myself.

In a letter, dated January 11, 1908, Mr. Henry Silver looks further back. "Tenniel and I," he writes, "are now the sole survivors of the weekly dinners there in the brave days of old, before the Indian Mutiny. Keene came in '60, F. C. B. in '63, and Kiki a year later; on the death of J. Leech, who had been sitting on my right hand, and had been very good to me—a *vaurien*—as indeed had his old schoolfellow, W. M. T., who faced us. I, too, had been at 'Greyfriars.' So of Mr. Punch's two chief pencils, and five pens, no fewer than three were in the hands of old Carthusians."

In accordance with Mr. Punch's wary habit, I served a considerable period of probation before I joined the regular staff and weekly sat at meat with them in the old dining-room in Bouverie Street. The first chapter of Toby's Diary appeared in January, 1881. It was not till Wednesday, July 16, 1884, that Harry Furniss and I joined the sacred table. I believe there were in earlier times occasional exceptions to the rule, but I have never seen an outsider at the *Punch* Dinner-Table, set in a room as closely "tiled" as any Freemason's Lodge. When, in 1907, Mark Twain visited England, he was entertained at dinner in the room, and at the table on which are cut the initials of all *Punch* men since the first. But it was an off day, not the Wednesday dinner.

There were occasions before formal admission to the table, when I was privileged to meet my future

colleagues. William Bradbury, partner in the firm of Bradbury, Agnew, the proprietors of *Punch*, was in charge of the business direction of the paper. Either he or his partner, William Agnew (not yet baroneted), sat in the chair facing the editor, who presided at the Wednesday dinner. Bradbury was never so happy as when he had the staff under his charge, taking them up the river to dine royally at the Mitre, Hampton Court, or driving four-in-hand to some country inn, where we dined and drove home, in the moonlight or the dark. When Burnand succeeded to the editorship, it occurred to William Bradbury to celebrate the occasion by a dinner at the Albion Hotel in the City, a famous hostelry, now, like much else that flourished in those days, passed away. It was a miscellaneous company of some fourscore selected from men distinguished in literature, journalism, and art. After dinner, we played at doing the cartoon for the following week. Each guest was provided with a sheet of note-paper, pen and ink, and invited to make suggestions. I am afraid none contributed to the cartoon as in due time it appeared.

Another time, when I, still an outsider, was invited to dine with the staff, the trysting was the Mitre, Hampton Court. Arrived at the railway station, there was only one fly in attendance, and that was secured by two prompter passengers. I asked leave to share their conveyance, and the driver's charges, to which they kindly assented. They, too, it chanced, were bound for the Mitre. On the arrival of the fly, they were surprised to find Burnand approach me with kindly greeting and hearty welcome. Later and for some years I sat between them at the *Punch* dinner-table, the Professor on the right hand, Gilbert à Beckett

on the left. It was at this dinner, served in the Mitre's best room, through whose windows the westering sun shone on a jovial company, that I first made the personal acquaintance of Du Maurier. We became friends at once, and remained so to the last, then happily afar off.

In addition to the three mentioned, there were present at the table on the occasion of my first meal in Bouverie Street, Charles Keene, Tenniel, Linley Sambourne, Milliken, and Arthur à Beckett, brother of Gil, son of one of the earliest and most valued contributors to *Punch*.

It was in the autumn of 1891 that Gil à Beckett's gentle spirit passed away. Although a confirmed invalid, fighting day and night with a painful disease, he worked on cheerfully to the last, joking and smiling, though he knew Death was at the door. Several weeks before being called away, he contributed to *Punch* quaint accounts of his sojourn at a quiet seaside place, telling how the ruthless deadly organ-grinder found him out. For the previous year he had not been in constant attendance at the weekly dinner. His last appearance was at the Almanac dinner held on October 3, 1891. As usual a bright, kindly smile lighted up his wasted face, and through his talk flashed lambent humour.

The end came suddenly. In final delirium his thoughts turned fondly to the comradeship of which, in days when Thackeray also sat at the Table, his father was an honoured member. In his last moments he babbled about the *Punch* cartoon of the coming week, in the invention and perfecting of which he should have no part.

It was he who suggested the historic cartoon bearing



the legend "Dropping the Pilot," which pictured Bismarck stepping down the gangway from a German man-of-war, the Kaiser looking on from the deck. This was *Punch's* commentary on the dismissal of the great Chancellor by his headstrong young master.

Milliken's name was, by comparison with those of some of his colleagues, unfamiliar to the public. Best known as the creator of "'Arry and 'Arriet," he, week after week, contributed admirable verse on topics of the day. His work was particularly fine when it took the form of eulogy on the mighty dead. He was apt at suggesting the subject, and devising the cartoon for the coming week. Shortly before his death a volume of his selected poems was published in book form.

"WOODCOTE, 83, LOUGHBOROUGH PARK, S.W.,

"November 14, 1892.

"MY DEAR LUCY,—I received this morning a copy of Saturday's issue of the *Liverpool Daily Post*. Thank you! As 'Arry would say, you are a real good sort, and no error!

"The article is quite the most appreciative I have seen, and catches precisely my purpose in penning these slangy rhymes, a purpose which some have missed—not unnaturally, perhaps. But the writer of this article has read very carefully, and understood completely. I could not have 'explained' 'Arry more clearly myself. In fact, some of its phrases might almost have been borrowed from the Preface I originally wrote, but which, in view of the book degenerating into a cheap shillingsworth, I had considerably to cut down. 'A vulgar Hedonist' hits off 'Arry to the life, and is exactly what I called him myself."

The Professor's (Percival Leigh) long day was drawing to a close when I came to sit by his side at the *Punch* table. He still wrote, scarcely a week passing without his sending in an article or a paragraph. With fine courtesy and consideration his manuscript was always set up in type and a proof sent to him. Nothing more came of it. Probably having returned the proof, pains-takingly corrected, he forgot all about it, and began again. Anyhow, Mr. Punch, in his generous, paternal fashion, saw that his weekly salary was duly discharged by cheque, and kept a seat for him at the dinner-table. The Professor had Shakespeare at his finger ends, and up to the last occasionally did good service by citation, and appropriate quotation or suggestion of apt title.

It was difficult for those who knew him only in the quiet eventide of his life to realise how prominent a place he once filled in Mr. Punch's Council. Whenever Shirley Brooks was temporarily withdrawn from editorial service by illness or holiday engagement, he handed the reins to the Professor. Why he was styled the Professor no one knew any more than why Tenniel was called "Jack Ides," or Du Maurier "Kiki." Probably it had some relation to his early career, when contemporaneously with Bob Sawyer he walked the hospitals in study of the science of surgery.

In conversation Charles Keene showed no sign of the humour that delighted mankind in his contributions to *Punch*. He rarely joined in the bright, sometimes rollicking, conversation at the Table.

Shortly after his death, there was published a selection of his letters. Among them were passages which all unconsciously sketched the quaint, archaic personality, with his love of old clothes, old pipes,

old anything, and his hatred of everything new, such inevitably savouring of Radicalism, which, in Keene's eyes, was the deadly sin.

One of Keene's few recorded contributions to conversation was his enthusiastic cry "Hear, hear!" when at a small dinner-party a brother fossil enunciated the axiom, "The English people were happier and in better circumstances two hundred years ago than they are now." He honestly believed that, and as far as he could endeavoured to live up to the axiom. It was said by one of his colleagues that for him life would have been endurable only for its new moons. To have a new moon every month was an idle phantasy, a display of the cloven foot of Radicalism, a waste of power and material.

During his early career, through many years, he had his studio on the attic floor of an old house in the Strand, a ramshackle place, quitted only when it threatened to tumble down. He was there when he was thirty years younger, and from that period dated, I fancy, the jacket with the leg-of-mutton sleeves in which, when I recall his figure, he always appears. Through a period extending over eight years I never saw him in any other save once, and then, to everybody's surprise, he turned up at an evening party in dinner dress, looking more than usually lugubrious. He got away as soon as he could, and it is easy to imagine the delight with which, when he reached his house in the Hammersmith Road, he got out of "the toggery," put on his old jacket, lit his pipe, and growled at Society. Keene had one last surprise for a gossiping world he hated and despised. He died leaving behind him nearly £40,000, scraped together through a self-denying life of hard labour.

On rare occasions, under strong pressure, he was

induced to tell his solitary story. It was all about a Bakewell pudding, and, as far as could be made out, related the ecstasy of some unknown person privileged to taste it in perfected form. There was a long catalogue of the component parts leading up to the exclamation which concluded the narrative, "Ah! that *was* a Bakewell pudding!" The fun came in watching Keene's ordinarily grave face as he worked up to the climax, the wrinkles transformed in the smiles that irradiated his countenance.

One night he startled and delighted the company by breaking fresh ground. "The other day," he began, "I was walking down Kennington Road." Here there was a pause, and he added, "When I say the other day, I mean forty years ago." This story had something indefinite to do with the outbreak of Chartism, when Louis Napoleon, in lodgings in London, instinctively enrolled himself on the side of law and order, a Special Constable's baton in hand.

Up to a dozen years ago the business of the weekly dinner was confined to the work of a single cartoon. Du Maurier, whose sketch faced Tenniel's page, and Linley Sambourne, who regularly contributed his half-page or page, were left to their own devices. Now there are two cartoons, generally political in their subject, each engaging to minutest detail the attention of the staff present. The result is to double the time and labour expended at the dinner. Gentlemen of England, who live at home at ease, and get their *Punch* at the bookstall on Tuesday night or on Wednesday morning, doubtless believe, if they think about the matter at all, that at some late hour of the previous night the cartoon was "knocked off," and went to press just as if it were the leading article in the morning



newspaper. As a matter of fact, it is designed exactly a week ahead. Peering through the clouds that hide the future its devisors, with more or less of prophetic accuracy, attempt to realise how a particular question of the day will present itself a week later.

A tragic historical incident illustrates the immutability of the rule which locks up *Punch* from editorial revision after the sheets are passed for press on Saturday night. On Friday, May 5, 1882, from my box in the Press Gallery of the House of Commons, I observed Lord Frederick Cavendish seated on the Treasury Bench. He was in his favourite attitude, making as little of himself as possible by twisting his legs together and packing them under the seat. I made some genial observations about him in connexion with current business. They were harmless enough, friendly towards a man whom, three days later, Gladstone, in a hushed House of mourning, spoke of as "one of the very noblest hearts ceasing to beat at the moment that he had devoted himself to the service of Ireland, full of love for that country, full of capacity to render her service, full of hope for the future."

In common with the vast majority present on that Friday night, I was not aware that Lord Frederick had accepted the office of Chief Secretary for Ireland in succession to Forster. He looked in at the House on his way to catch the Irish Mail. It was his last appearance. Late on the next night news reached the Home Secretary, at a big party given at the Admiralty, that Lord Frederick, walking in Phoenix Park in company with Mr. Burke, Permanent Under Secretary to the Irish Office, had been assassinated within sight of the window of the Viceregal Lodge whither he was bound. Earl Spencer, looking across the Park from

his bedroom window, actually saw the murderous tussle. Thinking it was some men larking, he took no further notice of the incident.

Early on Sunday morning I went down to the printing office with intention to delete from Toby's Diary a passage which, innocent in itself, would, published four days after the tragedy, appear unseemly in its levity. The forme was locked, but happily had not gone to press. All that could be done was to take out the paragraph, substituting one with an equal number of lines precisely filling the space.

To prepare a week in advance a picture designed to illustrate the actual political situation of the hour was comparatively easy in the time of Mark Lemon and even of Shirley Brooks, when the penny paper was not, and the electric telegraph fretted in its infancy. Those were good old East-Indiaman-round-the-Cape days, when news travelled slowly, and the interval of a week was, in respect of news, equivalent to the space of time between night and morning as it is counted now. Yet it is perfectly marvellous how rarely *Punch* has been caught tripping, how regularly it comes out with its cartoon so directly hitting the nail on the head as to leave undisturbed the popular impression alluded to, of the blow having been poised only on the night before.

A memorable exception arose in connection with the march to the relief of Gordon. When on the last Wednesday in January 1885 the staff met at dinner, the latest news from the Soudan showed the relief column almost within touch of Khartoum. It was clear that nothing could stop them, the only doubt being whether news of Gordon's deliverance would reach London before the publication of the next

number, or would immediately follow it. The topic asserted itself, and the only question to be debated was its method of treatment. This was settled by Tenniel drawing a picture showing Sir Charles Wilson's arrival at Khartoum with the remnant of the gallant force Stewart had led through the desert past Abu Klea. Gordon steps forward grasping both hands of his deliverer, while the group of soldiers in the background madly cheer. Within a few hours of the publication of *Punch* the telegraph flashed the news, "Khartoum taken by the Mahdi. General Gordon's fate uncertain." Immediately after came news of Gordon's death, and next week the cartoon showed Britannia, with sword in right hand, left arm hiding weeping eyes, the picture bearing the simple legend, "Too late!"

On Wednesday, January 13, 1892, we were in something of a similar quandary. Recollection of the former mishap imposed exceptional caution. The Duke of Clarence lay ill at Sandringham, almost on the eve of his appointed marriage with the Princess May of Teck. On Tuesday, January 12, the bulletin seemed to point to early recovery. On the next day, when Mr. Punch held council at the dinner-table, a turn for the worse was taken. Successive bulletins gave the case the gravest aspect. The Duke might linger on for a week, at the end of that time struggling into convalescence or drooping into the grave. In the mean time *Punch* must have its cartoon, and the subject must be settled on this very night.

One other subject would have to be adopted without discussion, save for the peril of the young Duke. Tewfik Pacha had just died, and his son, Abbas, was proclaimed Khedive. Within the next few days he would arrive at Alexandria, escorted by a British fleet.

Here was our subject ready to hand. But supposing anything happened to the eldest son of the Heir Apparent between now and next Wednesday, it would not do for *Punch* to come out with its principal cartoon, however well done, devoted to the succession to the Khedival Throne.

We got over the difficulty by the simple but not unlaborious plan of devising two cartoons, so as to be equal to either fate. On the next morning the Duke of Clarence died, and on the Wednesday following *Punch* came out with its principal cartoon, drawn by Tenniel, devoted to a single figure, the darkly cloaked form of the Angel of Death bearing away the bridal wreath. It bore the legend, "January 14, 1892." The second cartoon by Linley Sambourne, "The Under Cut," as it was called at the dinner-table, showed the young Khedive landing at Alexandria, received by the British Lion in blue-jacket garb, exclaiming, as he extended his hand, "I helped your father, and I'll stand by you."



## XXXVI

TENNIEL AND DU MAURIER

IN 1864 the gaiety of the nation was eclipsed by the death of John Leech. As a matter of course, Tenniel stepped into the place of the chief cartoonist of *Punch*, and thereafter for thirty-five years, week by week, dealt with current history. Fourteen years earlier, on the resignation of Doyle, he had joined the staff. Fifty years later, on December 3, 1900, being the date of his jubilee of service and that of his retirement, the usual course of the weekly dinner was interrupted in order to present him with a silver tobacco box. It bore a brief inscription of affection and farewell, followed by the signatures of the staff, reproduced in *fac-simile*.

His first cartoon will be found on page 44 of volume 20. It represents Lord John Russell as Lord Jack the Giant Killer, armed *cap à pie*, advancing to assail Cardinal Wiseman, the agent of Papal aggression. To the last, Tenniel reproduced his idea of the dog Toby, then first committed to paper. But his fancies of Mr. Punch and of John Bull in the flesh, in the course of time vastly improved in individuality and vigour. The original of one of his last cartoons appearing in *Punch* on September 19, 1900, he presented to me as a parting gift after long colleagueship. It is of historic value, representing Kruger sculling his

boat away from the wreck of the Transvaal. "The Sinking Ship," it is called, and shows how firm and delicate was the artist's touch even in his jubilee year.

Dining with us one night in Ashley Gardens, and, after his genial custom, waiting for a last smoke after the other guests were gone, he invited his hostess to make a selection from his cartoons, promising to give her the original. After a prolonged search, that was of itself a pleasure, she chose a cartoon incidentally marking the infant days of the Fourth Party. Gladstone and Hartington, two majestic figures, at one side; on the other, drawn as an impudent *gamin*, a vulgar little boy, is Lord Randolph Churchill, jeering at them.

It was one of the fancies of *Punch*, subtly indicative of the situation when Lord Randolph came to the fore, to present him either as a boy or a man of undersized growth. He was, I should say, fully five feet ten, a disposition to stoop, reproduced in his son Winston, partially detracting from a height that rather exceeded the average. A more marked, deliberately designed playfulness in this direction, is shown in the case of Mr. Thomas Gibson Bowles, sometime member for King's Lynn, one of the ablest Parliamentarians of his day. In Toby's Diary he was always called "Cap'en Tommy," and lurid stories were told of his prowess at Trafalgar, and later sea fights, where he lost an arm and a leg. E. T. Reed, seizing the idea, always drew him with a wooden leg, and a hook where his right hand ought to be. There is a story of the Lady's Gallery, which must be true, since Mr. Bowles told it, indicating the confusion arising out of this malpractice. The Member for King's Lynn interposing in debate (a not unfamiliar habit with him), a young lady in the gallery asked, "Who's that?"

"That is Mr. Tommy Bowles," said her mother.

"Oh no!" insisted the inquirer, a diligent student of *Punch*, "Cap'en Tommy Bowles has a wooden leg, and only one arm."

At the weekly dinner, I sat almost immediately opposite Tenniel, and had the opportunity of benefiting by study of his beautiful nature and perfect manner. Among his colleagues there was difference of opinion as to whether he more resembled Colonel Newcome or Don Quixote. Even with the burden of fourscore years on his shoulders, he was one of the youngest at the table. His lithe, upright figure, his ruddy countenance, and his bright look belied his years. Conjoined with a healthy body was a sunny wholesome disposition. Through an exceptionally long life, brought in contact with innumerable people of varied kind, it is safe to assert that he never made an enemy. His friends mustered in troops, the most attached being those admitted to the closest intimacy. In the wider circle outside Bouverie Street, his name is perhaps as familiar as any spoken in the English tongue. It was his mission through fifty years to shoot folly as it flew, to strike at fraud and corruption wheresoever they raised their heads, to touch with delicate, though firm hand, the political problems of the hour. This task he accomplished with an unfailing fancy, a delightful humour that never degenerated into coarseness, nor was lacking in dignity.

As noted, the *Punch* staff had their private farewell of Tenniel on his retirement. The public were not disposed to be left out of the reckoning. He was invited to attend a farewell dinner, at which the Prime Minister, Mr. Arthur Balfour, presided. Amongst the hosts were a gathering of men distinguished in various

walks of life, the like of which has rarely been seen even in London. A touching incident marked the progress of the memorable evening. The Premier, having in one of his most charming speeches, proposed a toast to the guest of the evening, Tenniel rose to reply. He was received with an outbreak of cheering that literally broke him down. He had prepared a speech in reply, which doubtless was marked by the manly simplicity that characterised his every word and action. He stood for some moments with shaking hand and quivering lips, vainly endeavouring to recall the opening sentence. The words would not come back to memory. After struggling for some time, amid the murmur of sympathetic cheers, he abruptly sat down. It was agreed in conversation that no speech, however pointed and well ordered, could have exceeded the eloquence of this ungovernable flood of emotion.

Though Tenniel ceased from his long labour, he remained a member of the staff. His seat at the table is at his disposal, and his long clay churchwarden pipe with his monogram on the bowl is preserved in the rack. I fancy he intended occasionally to look in on Wednesday nights. Indeed, he wrote to me on March 25, 1907—"Now that Spring, according to the Almanac, has really begun (it's snowing at the present moment) I am looking forward to the happiness of meeting all the dear clever boys again, and on the earliest Wednesday I can manage, shake hands." Only once did he go through the ordeal.

It was an odd coincidence that where all the rest smoked cigars he and Keene should have displayed a remarkable preference in the matter of pipes, Tenniel was faithful to his "churchwarden." Keene smoked



an odd little pipe, one of a collection dug up, it was said, in excavations near the old London Wall. It was very like the minute tube the Japanese smoke, varying inasmuch that whilst the Jap's pipe is made of metal, the early English specimens were clay. The great art of smoking them was to preserve a sod of tobacco left after the pipe went out. Two or three of these would fill a pipe, and Keene's grim face was illumed with ecstasy as he smoked this villainous residuum.

The subjoined correspondence tells its own story—

“42, ASHLEY GARDENS,

“July 21, 1891.

“DEAR MR. AKERS DOUGLAS,

“I wonder if you have had time to take note of the remarkable, indeed in the history of British Journalism, the unprecedented reception Mr. Punch met with on his Jubilee.

“It suggests an opportunity which I venture to think will not be unpalatable to Lord Salisbury, of the Premier's joining in the tribute. The mainstay of *Punch* now and for nearly forty years past is John Tenniel. His name is a household word wherever the English tongue is spoken. He is one of the few conspicuously successful men who have not an enemy in private or professional circles.

“I do not know whether you are personally acquainted with him, but he has friends in several of your colleagues in the Ministry, who recognise in him the very pink of English gentle manhood.

“I venture to suggest that the Jubilee of *Punch* would be a fitting occasion for the Crown to pay some compliment to the veteran artist. I know such action

would be as much appreciated by the *Punch* staff as if it were conferred individually upon each member, whilst in artistic and general circles it would be acclaimed.

"I should add that I write to you without concert with any of my colleagues, so that if nothing can be done in the matter, there will be no feeling of having suffered rebuff.

"Yours faithfully,

"HENRY W. LUCY."

"12, DOWNING STREET, S.W.,

"*July 27, 1891.*

"DEAR MR. LUCY,

"I have delayed any answer to yours of 21st, hoping that I might have been able to see my chief on the subject. I have not been able to do so as yet, and therefore all I can say is that it will be a great pleasure to me to urge at the first opportunity the claims of Mr. John Tenniel.

"I have not the pleasure of Mr. Tenniel's acquaintance in the flesh, but he has no warmer admirer than

"Yours truly,

"A. AKERS DOUGLAS."

Mr. Akers Douglas was, at the time this correspondence passed, Chief Whip of the Unionist Party, an office known as that of the Patronage Secretary.

Lord Salisbury missed the opportunity of performing a gracious and popular action. In the following year a general election brought Mr. Gladstone into office. I sent Sir William Harcourt a copy of the above letter, asking him to bring the matter personally

under the notice of the new Premier. "*Les beaux esprit se rencontre*," Sir William wrote to me expressing warm approval of the suggestion. Within a few months the Knighthood was bestowed.

The subjoined refers to an autograph letter from the author of "Through the Looking Glass," of which I had seen a copy. Thinking it would interest Tenniel, I sent him a cutting containing the text.

"10, PORTSDOWN ROAD, MAIDA HILL, W.,  
"June 12, 1907.

"MY DEAR H. W. LUCY,

"'Tho' lost to sight,' ever held in happiest remembrance and I thank you—and Mrs. Lucy—very heartily for the two kind letters.

"The little episode in your admirable 'London Letter' concerning 'Lewis Carroll'—'Through the Looking Glass'—and 'Dicky Doyle,' certainly took me rather by surprise, in that I have not the very remotest recollection of the circumstances—so long ago—and therefore, how I, in my right mind, and perfectly sober senses, could for a moment have thought of persuading Lewis Carroll (failing myself) or agreeing with him in any way, that 'Dicky' Doyle would be equal to illustrating 'Through the Looking Glass'—fills me with an amazement which might well puzzle the best of conjurers. When having, ages ago, forgotten all about it, I saw the little paragraph with poor Dodgson's letter to 'Dicky' in print, it gave me rather a turn to think that what it described occurred just fifty years ago; and that I am now in my 88th year!

"However, that I am wonderfully well in health, 'I give Heaven praise,' the great trouble being steadily increasing blindness, the mere thought of which fills

me with terror and dismay, as even now I read and write—especially write—with difficulty. In which distressful circumstances I can only hope and pray, that you and your dear wife will kindly and gracefully forgive this disgracefully belated acknowledgment of the ‘London Letter,’ and with ever kindest regards to both, believe me, as of old

“Very sincerely yours,

“JOHN TENNIEL.”

For a man in his 88th year, dim-sighted withal, the four-paged letter is a marvel of firm, clear writing.

At the *Punch* table, Du Maurier was always called “Kicky.” I spell it so without authority, for I never saw it written. Others write it “Kiki.” Some In Memoriam notes which appeared in print after his death, brought me interesting correspondence on the subject. Burnand wrote: “Du Maurier was ‘Kiki’ not ‘Kicky.’ He got the name in his French student days. ‘Kiki’ is a thoroughly French soubriquet.” This is interesting and authoritative. But it is obvious that the French pronunciation of the name so spelt would be “Keekee,” whereas he was always “Kicky” at the *Punch* table. On the other hand, the late Ernest Hart, writing to me, testifies—

“In an album belonging to my sister, Me. Vignal, is a drawing made many years since by the late accomplished artist, whom we all deplore, of Mr. Whistler and himself. It is signed ‘Jimmy and Kicky.’ They are walking jauntingly along, arm in arm, and are excellent portraits of the two friends as they were in the flesh upwards of thirty-five years ago. Subsequent



events lend a special interest to this sportive but now plaintive souvenir."

A new turn is given to the subject in the following letter addressed to me by one of Du Maurier's old schoolfellows:—

"At the London University College School we called him 'Kicky' for a very definite reason. He was never still with his feet, flinging his legs about in a way which we considered 'very French,' and England at that time, 1845-52, was a much more stiff and ungymnastic country than it is now.

"I have a vivid recollection of him during the short time he was at the school. His quick, jerky conversation equally voluble in French or English, he was accustomed to point, so to speak, with his feet. He would come close up to you, his eyelids rapidly blinking, his hands in his trousers' pockets (bad form in '50), and emphasize a torrent of questions by knocking off your cap with one foot, and sending your books flying with the other. Before you could get at him, 'Bewsong,' as his name was generally pronounced, was ten yards off. All this was in perfect good humour. Sometimes he instructed us in 'Savate,' a kind of French boxing with the feet, then being exhibited at a place in Leicester Square. In dividing the honours at these lessons there were no ha'pence for him, but unlimited kicks for us, which he delightedly administered with a perfectly calm face.

"He was with me in the French classes conducted by a rather quick-tempered and stiff master, M. A. Ragan, whose academic taste was outraged by 'Kicky's' very colloquial French.

"The verbal sparring between these two was a great delight to the rest of us. To begin with, there was his name. He would juggle with 'Busson' and 'Du Maurier' (the latter M. Ragan never willingly accepted) until a storm of voluble French, both at it at once, would be brought to an end with a thundering demand, 'Tell me your name, sir.' Then 'Busson du Maurier' would be fired off like a shell, and peace ensued.

"During these encounters 'Kicky's' feet were never idle. The rows of books and papers on the table at which the master sat, were constantly on the move. In the midst of the altercation, M. Ragan, who was near-sighted, was making little dives and clutches, as one article after another threatened to slip to the ground. If, in his excitement, he rose from his chair, it would be sure to slide off under the delicately administered 'sleight of leg' Kicky managed to apply to it."

For more than thirty years, Du Maurier had his place at the weekly dinner of the *Punch* staff. It was a pathetic close to his life that it ebbed out with the finish of a Wednesday. About 9 o'clock on the night of the first Wednesday in October, 1896, there came to his colleagues at the *Punch* table a telegraphic message conveying the latest bulletin. It was by no means despairing. It even encouraged the hope some clung to that when the spring came round, and all nature's best productions brightened into new life, we should have "Kicky" back again at the table. Two hours later, at a time when, through ordinary weeks of a long career, he would have been quitting the table on his way homeward, the end of all his journeys was signalled. He

could not hear the echo of Thackeray's grim song round Mr. Punch's mahogany tree—

“Here let us sport,  
Boys, as we sit;  
Laughter and wit  
Flashing so free.  
Life is but short—  
When we are gone,  
Let them sing on  
Round the old tree.”

Of late years he had not been a constant attendant at the Wednesday dinner. Living on Hampstead Heath, it was no slight undertaking to dine in Bouverie Street with the prospect of engaging a cabman willing near midnight to brave the final ascent. He had some humorous stories of his struggles with reluctant cabmen in facing the last quarter of an hour of the journey. That through many years he should have attended so regularly was testimony to his affectionate associations with the scene and the company.

In an undated letter, probably written somewhere about 1892, he shrewdly discourses on the difference between his work and that of his old friend Leech. At the foot he drew a dead lion, labelled Leech, and a live jackass with the initials D. M.

“NEW GROVE HOUSE, HAMPSTEAD HEATH.

“DEAR LUCY,

“Very many thanks for your excellently well written and most appreciative article, which has muchly touched and gratified your little D. M.—in spite of the ever inevitable comparison with Leech, whose aims and methods were the antipodes of mine.

"And indeed I ought not to complain of such a comparison, for if the greatest artist is he who gives the greatest pleasure to the greatest number (including myself), Leech is certainly the greatest artist that ever lived; and to be mentioned in the same breath (or par.) with him is an honour.

"Even Thackeray himself complained of being constantly compared to Dickens, who was ten times as popular as himself—and didn't even write for *Punch*, and wasn't even dead! Not that *I* am for comparing such featherweights as Leech and Du M. and their likes, with the likes of Thackeray and Dickens. The pen is a so much bigger engine than the pencil, that the wielders thereof, *cæteris paribus*, stand on very different platforms. I only wish to point out the distinction between the artist (either *penny* or *pencilly*) who tries to depict people as they really are, and the artist who has the enviable gift of so exquisitely distorting them that the sacrifice of truth is more than compensated by the side-splitting laughter the performance creates. They are really not fit objects for a parallel: the former is too much handicapped by the comparative severity of his aim and method—and not even 'the colour of Titian and the design of Michael Angelo' will win him favour when the funny man is by. *Tant il est bon de bien rire!*

"*Contrastez-nous, si vous voulez—ne nous comparez pas!* Briggs' horse is running away with a delightful but impossible person. It's a joyous nightmare: my polo ponies are under the perfect control of gilded youths, whose object is to look their best in the eyes of lovely woman! But beautiful as man and horse can be, if in real life Briggs' horse were to run away with his master across the polo-ground at Hurlingham,



I guess the polo-players would be out of it, in the memories of that happy day. Fortunately for them, no man that is being run away with could ever look so funny as Mr. Briggs!

"*But*, also, and *en fin de compte*, nobody feels more than I do (who know him thoroughly by heart) that Leech stands alone, unapproached hitherto, and probably unapproachable!

"(I have generally stuck to the 'classes' because C. K. seems to have monopolized the 'masses'—Division of labour.)

"What a long letter! and not very clear after all. At all events, I am much obliged to you for the sympathetic touch with which you have treated

"Yours ever,

"G. DU MAURIER.

"(P.S.) *a Mercredi!*—Mitre—Hampton Court."

He took little part in the keen discussion that leads up to the conception of the cartoon. But he closely followed it, occasionally offered a suggestion, eagerly seized, tossed about, pancake-making fashion, and in the main adopted.

It was after the conclusion of stern business that Kicky came to the front. When, as was his custom of summer nights, he took off his coat, lolled back in his chair, lit another of his illimitable cigarettes, and began to talk, his personality loomed large at the table. He was a delightful conversationalist, his talk lambent with fancy and humour. Those who have never had the pleasure of sitting in his company will find a satisfying reflex in his novels. When he discovered to his amazement that, in addition to being a great artist, he was a born literary man, he created and established

his phenomenal success by refraining from strained effort. I do not know any writer whose printed words are more like his ordinary talk than some of the best passages in "Peter Ibbetson" and "Trilby" are to Kicky's after-dinner talk at the *Punch* table. In reading them, I can hear his pleasant voice with its musical intonation of every syllable, a gift that came to him with his French birth.

About "Trilby" Burnand wrote—

"September 30, 1894.

"DEAR LUCY,

"I think you darkly hinted your willingness to 'do' 'Trilby' in *Punch*. By all means: it is *as far as I have read it* a decidedly clever as well as an interesting and amusing book: the freshness of the style being marred by the introduction of the commonest *cheapest* Music Hall Slang of the present day, unintelligible to many *now* and Syrochaldee, etc., to the ordinary reader in the near future. Had Thackeray had a bastard son in literature, and that bastard had had another bastard in literature, I think it possible that the last in this line might possibly have written 'Trilby.' The Deistic Little Billee sneering to his worthy confidant, a dog, at what he is utterly incapable of appreciating (I do not say of 'understanding' or 'comprehending') represents that tyrannical braggart school of French deism (absolute Atheism is impossible) which would, in the name of Liberty of thought, burn, behead and crucify all who might venture to differ from themselves: as in fact they did in the Great French Revolution and as they did again under the Commune in our own day. Of which the sum is this, *if you agree with me*, just introduce one line suggesting

that it would have been better to have curtailed (this contains no covert allusion to the Dog) Little Billee's inordinately long and somewhat commonplace monologue in vol. II., and still better would it have been (*if that monologue were essential to the scheme*) to have done as Thackeray would most certainly have done, and have reverently answered 'the Spirit that denies' in one of those confidential paragraphs of which W. M. T. was a master.

"Yours truly,

"F. C. BURNAND."

On Wednesday nights Kicky was always in the fullest flood of high spirits, his talk irradiated with flashes of subtlest humour. With failing health, he was apt to be influenced by low spirits. Success from a new avenue, sunlit by quite unusual glow of pecuniary reward, came to him too late. He never was the same man after he made his great success with "Trilby." I remember one night in the early summer, of the year of his death, dining with us at Ashley Gardens, he met an old friend. Talking about his next novel, Lord Wolseley asked what was its title.

"I think," said Du Maurier, with a humorous smile, "I'll call it 'Soured by Success.'"

There is many a true word spoken in jest. I am afraid truth underlay this little flash of humour.

Perhaps, after all, the secret of his dolor was failing health. A not too robust frame succumbed to the efforts of an unselfish, strenuous life that spread a wide wave of pleasure among mankind. In accordance with his directions Du Maurier's body was cremated at Woking. The ashes placed in a casket were buried under a yew tree in a corner of Hampstead Parish

Church, within sound of whose bells long years of his life passed. At the open grave, so small that it seemed prepared for a little child, Canon Ainger, long time a close friend, with faltering voice read the solemn passage, "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God of His great mercy to take unto Himself the soul of our dear brother here departed, we therefore commit his body to the ground."

Among the group who stood bareheaded whilst the casket was reverently placed in the grave were Du Maurier's colleagues, most of whom had been present when, on the last Wednesday in July, he came down to sit, for the last time, in the little circle his presence brightened for more than thirty years. He looked curiously grey in the face, one sadly remembers, and, to begin with, was unusually quiet. But he brisked up when cigarette-time came, and stayed late in merriest mood. On this day in chill October we had come to bury Kicky, not any more to hear his pleasant talk.

*Et puis bon soir.*



## XXXVII

SIR FRANCIS BURNAND

THE appointment of Frank Burnand to the editorship of *Punch*, on vacation of the chair by Tom Taylor, was hailed with acclaim. Here was the right man in the right place, the square peg in the square hole. The soul of humour himself, Burnand quickly recognized its flashes in others, and was ever on the look-out to secure desirable recruits for Mr. Punch's service. With one exception, the staff carrying on the work to-day were all selected and appointed during the term of his editorship. When he became editor, he found himself splendidly supported on the artistic side. Tenniel, Keene, Du Maurier, and Linley Sambourne were a quartette that preserved the ancient renown of *Punch* pictures. Burnand turned his attention to strengthening the literary wing of the staff.

His success was marked by an observation made in the late Eighties by Mr. James Bryce, now British Minister at Washington: "I used formerly to look through the pictures in *Punch* and lay the number down; now I read it through."

While still in the full enjoyment of health, Burnand, in whatsoever company he found himself, bubbled with humour. He was at his very best presiding at the *Punch* table. It is a pity no record was made of the good things he flashed forth at every sitting. We

laughed and forgot. One I remember, perhaps because it was outside the constellation that shone on Wednesday nights. He and I were talking in the crowded assembly at the Foreign Office on one of the Queen's Birthday nights. A guest in uniform, starred and medalled, came up and effusively shook hands with Burnand, whose reception betrayed some embarrassment. Observing this the new-comer said—

“I see you don't know me from Adam.”

“My dear sir,” said Burnand, “I didn't know Adam.”

Tired out myself with long discussion on an especially difficult cartoon, I often admired and envied the patience displayed by Burnand. He listened to every suggestion, weighed and appraised it, attending carefully to comments. No pains were too great, no devotion of time too lavish, if in the end the right thing was hit upon.

With all his geniality he had that reserve force of autocracy necessary to one in his position. I never inquired into the circumstances, but I fancy some ebullition of this character led to what might have proved a serious matter. As far as it touched me personally, I have kept the secret for twelve years. As there is no discredit to any one concerned, and as it pointed to a momentous turn proposed in the life some passages of which are here recorded, there is no reason why I should not mention the episode.

Every year, on the eve of the opening of the Royal Academy Exhibition, Sir Henry Tate, founder of the Picture Gallery which bears his honoured name, gave a banquet at his house at Streatham, the guests being Royal Academicians or Associates. By some chance I was regularly invited to join the charmed circle, being

the only layman present with the exception of Sir William Agnew, whose long and intimate connection with painting and painters made his comradeship more natural. Driving to Streatham he was good enough to pick me up at Ashley Gardens, safely delivering me home after a cheerful dinner.

On one of these occasions (April 28, 1897) he, abruptly turning the conversation, offered me the editorship of *Punch*.

"What about Burnand?" I asked.

He explained that differences had arisen between the editor and the proprietors, which confirmed the latter in the slowly formed resolution of making a change.

If Agnew had offered me his brougham and the pair of horses that were trundling us down to Streatham I should have been far less surprised. It was a glittering prize dangled before appreciative eyes. At the time I would rather have been editor of *Punch* than Emperor of India. Of all positions on the British Press it is to my mind at once the most honourable and the most honoured. The temptation was supreme. I don't think it cost me two minutes' hesitation before it was put aside. I could get along very well as I was. For Burnand the severance from the paper with which his name had been so long associated would be a cruel blow, not only to his pride, but to his prospects as a bread-winner.

I told Agnew that, much as I valued the honour done me, I could not accept it to the deposition of the man who gave me my first footing on *Punch*, and whose friendship I had enjoyed for fifteen years. Agnew would not accept the refusal, insisting that I should, as he put it, sleep over the matter. I slept

accordingly, very comfortably, and on the following day sent him the subjoined letter—

“42, ASHLEY GARDENS, VICTORIA STREET, S.W.,

“29, 4, '97.

“MY DEAR AGNEW,—Referring to our conversation yesterday evening, I have carefully thought it over, and am confirmed in the instant impression I endeavoured to convey to you.

“I regard the editorship of *Punch* as the blue ribbon of the English Press. That I should have been thought worthy to have it offered to me gives me sincere pleasure. But, my dear Agnew, I do not forget that F. C. B. brought me on the *Punch* staff. I could not under any possible arrangement of circumstances be a party to his supersession to my personal and professional advantage.

“With many thanks and sincere esteem,

“I am, yours faithfully,

“HENRY W. LUCY.”

Having thus obtained a *locus standi*, I had the great pleasure of acting as mediator between the temporarily estranged friends. Of course Burnand knew nothing about the conversation on the drive to Streatham. Till these lines appear in print no one outside the brougham does, with the exception of my wife, who (for a woman) is singularly trustworthy.

By exception I did not share the proverbial fate of those who in a quarrel interpose. On the contrary, when the sun shone again in Bouverie Street, Burnand wrote a letter acknowledging with exaggerated appreciation my services in the matter. Sir William Agnew was not less generous in his commentary, and we lived



happily ever afterwards, or, to be precise, for another nine years.

Burnand was insistent upon constant attendance at the weekly dinner. For myself the arrangement was a little awkward, since up to the date of Mr. Balfour's Premiership, the House of Commons, adjourning before six on Wednesday evenings, left the night free for Parliamentary dinners. Here is one of the occasional remonstrances failure to put in an appearance drew upon a guilty head.

"June 8, '94.

"MY DEAR LUCY,—Both Tenniel and myself refuse almost all Wednesday invitations to dinner, and I do hope that you will in future place Mr. Punch's claims upon you before those of dukes, duchesses, baronesses, countesses, Members of Parliament, and Dr. R. Roose.

"If the highly popular Toby does not make some sacrifice for his beloved master, Mr. Punch, during the Session, his beloved master will be deeply hurt by his neglect. You see, though the dinner is a pleasure, yet at the same time it is business, and business is the first consideration.

"Yours truly,

"F. C. BURNAND."

William Agnew—Sir William, Bart., as he became somewhat tardily in view of his claims upon the party with which he was associated in times of adversity as well as in prosperity—was thoroughly imbued with the spirit and traditions of *Punch*. He was never so happy as when entertaining the staff at dinner in his house in Great Stanhope Street, or when occupying the vice-chair at the Wednesday dinner. In later years,

advancing age bringing its troubles and disabilities, he disappeared from the scene, to the regret especially of the older members of the staff whose acquaintance was more intimate, and therefore more affectionate.

“42, ASHLEY GARDENS,  
“VICTORIA STREET, 1897.

“MY DEAR AGNEW,—I have always intended that, when my pilgrimage to Bouverie Street on Wednesday evenings shall cease, my colleagues and their successors in the old room should be in possession of the portraits of Burnand and Tenniel, painted for me by E. A. Ward. I hereby bequeath them. Mrs. Lucy is aware of my intention, and I expect that my executors will observe it on presentation of this letter. But if you can suggest any more formal and effective way in which the desire can be carried out it shall be done.

“The only condition I make is that on each of the frames shall be let in a small plate with the inscription:—‘Presented by Toby, M.P., to his colleagues and companions round the old Mahogany Tree.’ Here to follow the day and year of my death. The pictures are to be the possession of the *Punch* staff, to hang in their dining-room.

“With kind regards,

“Yours faithfully,

“HENRY W. LUCY.”

“Your generosity touches me,” Agnew wrote. “I can say no more; I will consider the way your wishes were best made operative, and bless you for your loyalty to old *Punch*.”

Seven years later I sat to Sargent for my own portrait, which will finally join the company of my

two old friends and colleagues in the dining-room where through many years we weekly sat at meat.

"11, GREAT STANHOPE STREET, W.,

"April 19, 1904.

"MY DEAR LUCY,—I have just come in from the New Gallery, and I cannot refrain from writing to say that I saw what I think is the finest portrait by *Sargent ever painted*, that of H. W. Lucy.

"You and he are to be congratulated.

"Yours very truly,

"WM. AGNEW."

When I informed Burnand of my intention to bequeath the portraits to the *Punch* table he shrewdly suggested the desirability of a time limit. It is the present historic proprietary and the companionship of which I have been a member for a quarter of a century I desired to benefit. In these days of quick change of the *personnel* of newspaper proprietors no one can say what a year may bring forth. Adopting his view I varied the original intention, leaving the three portraits in Mr. Punch's keeping for ten years, begging him thereafter to offer them to the authorities of the National Portrait gallery.

## XXXVIII

### THIRTY-SIX YEARS' HARD LABOUR AT WESTMINSTER

THIRTY-SIX years ago, when I took my seat in the Press Gallery of the House of Commons as director of the staff of a great morning newspaper, Mr. Gladstone was Prime Minister, Mr. Lowe, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Mr. Bruce (afterwards Lord Aberdare), Home Secretary; Earl Granville, Foreign Secretary; Lord Kimberley, Colonial Secretary; Mr. Cardwell, War Minister; the Duke of Argyll, Secretary of State for India; Mr. Goschen, First Lord of the Admiralty; Sir John Coleridge, Attorney-General; Mr. Childers, Chancellor of the Duchy. All, all are gone, the old familiar faces.

Of members of the first Gladstone Administration still with us are Lord Lansdowne, who commencing official life as Junior Lord of the Treasury in a Liberal Government, lived to succeed Lord Salisbury at the Foreign Office, and to lead the Unionist majority in the House of Lords; and Mr. Arthur Peel, who proved one of the best Speakers the House of Commons has known, and to-day lives in honoured retirement as Viscount Peel. Lately died the Duke of Devonshire, who, as Lord Hartington, was Chief Secretary for Ireland; and Mr. Goschen, a Liberal President of the Poor Law Board, who within a score of years bloomed



into the fulness of a Unionist Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Gladstone was in his sixty-fourth year, but, as far as mental and physical activity were concerned, in the very prime of life. Two years later, smitten at the poll with heavy hand, he suddenly convinced himself that he was advanced in years, and had earned the guerdon of rest. "At sixty-five," he wrote to "my dear Granville" immediately after the rout of the Liberals at the General Election of 1874, "after forty-two years of a laborious public life, I think myself entitled to retire on the first opportunity." Gladstone had in remarkable measure, the comforting gift of convincing himself of the accuracy of any view of current events he might take at a particular moment. If they diametrically differed from others expressed at earlier epochs, what matter? He was dealing with to-day, not the day before yesterday. When he uttered this wail for rest he really meant he had done with political affairs, and might now devote himself to the affairs of the Vatican, varied by more leisurely study of Homer.

Soon he discovered his mistake. His manner of rectifying it was a little bit of comedy delightful to watch. Through the opening session of the Disraelian Parliament he studiously absented himself, leaving the conduct of the business of the Opposition in commission. Shortly after Lord Hartington accepted the thankless post of Leader, he began furtively to reappear on the familiar scene. As the session lengthened the old passion awakened in his breast. With increasing force he felt himself drawn back into the vortex of parliamentary life. That, however, would never do. Had he not publicly announced his retirement, and

was not his seat opposite the brass-bound box filled by another? The temptation was irresistible, and he felt himself yielding to it.

This he did with characteristic subtlety. When he looked in on debate he assumed a casual air, unconsciously founded upon remote study of Paul Pry, indicating hope that he did not intrude. Also, like Paul Pry, he went the length of carrying an umbrella under his arm when he emerged from behind the Speaker's chair, an incident unparalleled in the career of an ex-Minister. Its meaning was clear to the seeing eye. When he left home nothing was farther from his thoughts than resumption of attendance on sittings of the House of Commons. As he strolled down Parliament Street, meaning to take the air of the silver Thames as it swept by the Embankment, his eye fell upon the lofty structure of the Houses of Parliament.

"Hallo!" said Mr. Wemmick, taking a morning walk with Miss Skiffins on his arm, "here's a church. Let's go in and get married."

Readers of "Great Expectations" will remember how the great strategy of Mr. Wemmick's life was an attitude of unpreparedness for ordered events, an air of surprise at the development of a deliberately arranged sequence. That, of course, was not Gladstone's mental habitude; but we can imagine him on this particular occasion saying to himself, "Hallo! here's the House of Commons. Let's go in and see what they are doing."

Entering, he kept up appearances by sitting at the remote end of the bench, the humble place of ex-Under-Secretaries. In further evidence of the casualness of his call, he put on his hat when he sat down, crossed gloved hands over the handle of his umbrella, and

looked round the House with the glow of pleased interest seen on the faces of strangers in the Gallery making their first acquaintance with the historic scene.

Of course this did not last long. The glamour of the House of Commons reasserted its power over the man who in youth and manhood splendidly added to it. The cry of hapless Bulgaria, trampled on by the Turk, acted as a trumpet-call upon the veteran who had laboriously convinced himself that his helmet was now a hive for bees. When he now came down to the House the umbrella, which added a touch of farce to the situation by slightly Gampish appearance, was left in the stand. His head was bared. He literally took off his gloves and "went for" a Government that looked on unconcerned at the massacres at Sofia, a Premier who characterised narrative of the atrocities as "coffee-house babble."

Never in public life in either hemisphere were there confronted two men more diametrically opposed in manner and mode of thought than Disraeli and Gladstone. They had only one thing in common—genius. To each the other was an interesting, inexplicable puzzle. Here, again, there was difference in their method of contemplation. Gladstone, with his untamable energy, his rich verbosity, his susceptibility to religious and moral influences, rather amused Dizzy. When in fine frenzy rolling, whether championing the rights of nationalities or the privilege of minorities, Dizzy, seated on the other side of the table, regarded him through his eyeglass with the air of one studying some strange animal recently imported. Gladstone was much more definite in his views about Disraeli. He rarely spoke or wrote of him in private relations.

When he did there was only futile attempt to disguise his conviction that Dizzy was sorely lacking in principle.

When I first saw Disraeli in the House of Commons he was seated on the Front Opposition Bench, silent, sphinx-like. He was in disgrace at the time with his own party, having disappointed their hopes by declining office, proffered him by the Queen after Gladstone's defeat in 1873 on the Irish University Bill. His prescience was abundantly justified when, a few months later, a General Election gave him a majority that for the first time in an already long career placed him in power as well as in office. It was after that epoch that the Disraeli known to the last generation, the statesman who will live in history among British Prime Ministers, came to birth. Hitherto, through a turbulent life, he had a dual battle to fight. There were his political adversaries in the Liberal camp; his worst, most dangerous, foes were those of his own household. For more than thirty years he had been *suspect*, an undesirable alien among the Tory party, to which he, after due consideration, finally decided to attach himself. His supreme gifts made him indispensable to them. None the less they distrusted and disliked him.

Even after he came into his own, Prime Minister and Leader of a party he, as he boasted, had educated, there was evidence in the House of Commons of the old, deeply rooted feeling. It was manifested by two typical Tories, George Bentinck (known as "Big Ben" to distinguish him from Cavendish Bentinck, a kinsman of lesser stature) and Beresford Hope, uncle of the then unknown Arthur James Balfour. Hope was founder of the *Saturday Review*, proprietor through its palmy days, which were chiefly devoted to attacking



Dizzy. To hail him as "that glorious Jew" in rhymed description of a ministerial dinner-party given by him on his accession to the office of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was, in respect of the adjective, complimentary compared with what readers of the *Saturday* were taught to expect. Dizzy retorted by reference to Beresford Hope's "Batavian grace." This perfect Disraelian phrase can be fully enjoyed only by those who had personal knowledge of Beresford Hope. Of Dutch descent, he preserved the somewhat ungainly stumpiness of figure common to his forbears. His manner of addressing the House was thoughtfully elaborate, his phrases being drawn out in fashion suggestive of the finally successful operation of a corkscrew upon a stubborn cork.

Dizzy grew almost mellow in the sunshine of late, unexpected prosperity. Not comparable with Gladstone as a debater, certainly not as an orator, he was infinitely his superior as Leader of the House of Commons. Gladstone walked about lobby and corridor with his head in the clouds, not seeing on his way faithful followers whose loyalty would have been strengthened by a nod, a smile, or a friendly word. He did not mean to be offensive. In this habit he was so in more than one well-known instance, greatly to the detriment of his cause and his Government. In social life the most courteous of men, when actually engaged in the service of the State he had no time or thought for small personal matters. Disraeli had, and greatly profited by their culture.

Lord Rowton, long time his private secretary, told me his chief utilised what otherwise might have been wasted moments in the Division Lobby by soldering any little cracks apparent in the ministerial forces. If

the Whips notified to him sign of revolt in a particular quarter, the Premier, watching the throng pass through the Division Lobby, would nod recognition to the discontented member, engage him in conversation whilst the Lobby emptied, and, if the case were at all threatening, link arms and lead him on to the wicket where the tellers stand. "I never," said Lord Rowton, "knew of a brooding mutiny come to a head after the Chief had walked out of the Lobby arm-in-arm with the leading spirit."

Nor did Disraeli limit his blandishments to his own party. I have personal knowledge of two captures made from the enemy's camp. One was Joseph Cowen, a man of letters, one of the few natural orators heard at Westminster in modern times. A Radical of extreme type, whose sympathies went out to struggling nationalities wherever they were in revolt against tyranny, Cowen naturally ranged himself on the side of Gladstone when, in 1874, the Liberal Premier asked for renewal of office. As a youth he had met the great statesman at the house of his father during the campaign of 1868. His newspaper, one of the most influential in the north of England, helped to keep Northumberland faithful to the Liberal flag when all around it fortresses were falling. Returned in 1874 to represent his native town, remembering former acquaintance with his father's guest, Cowen, on entering the House, naturally expected some recognition from his venerated Leader. Gladstone, coming upon him in the Lobby, passed him without a sign. It was a small event, but recollection of it rankled. Dizzy may or may not have heard of it. He certainly was at pains to make the acquaintance of the member for Newcastle, and succeeded in turning what might have

been a faithful follower of the Liberal Leader into an exceedingly embarrassing adversary.

The other true story shows Dizzy in his serio-comic mood. In the Parliament of 1874-80 there was a pompous, preposterous little Irish member known as Dr. O'Leary. When the Premier was conducting through the House the Imperial Titles Bill which transformed his Queen into Empress, he strained every nerve to add extraneous votes to the assured Ministerial majority. The Irish members were, in accordance with traditional habit, "ag'in' the Ministry." But the question was not one that directly affected Ireland. By taking thought, he might seduce one or two into the Ministerial Lobby. His eye falling on Dr. O'Leary, he with quick intuition saw his chance. On the critical eve of the second reading of the Bill he came upon the Doctor strolling down the corridor on his way to the Tea-Room. Overtaking him, he laid a hand on his shoulder with friendly pressure and exclaimed, "My dear Doctor, how you remind me of my old friend Tom Moore! As I walked behind you just now the resemblance was startling." That won the trick. The member for Drogheda voted for the Government on the Royal Titles Bill.

John Bright had temporarily retired from parliamentary life when I entered upon it. He came back in 1874. But he was never more the man whose oratory charmed and convinced the House during the prolonged struggle round the standard of parliamentary reform. He did not through the first session of the Disraelian Parliament break the silence of many years. He was content to sit at the lower end of the bench in companionship with Gladstone on his fitful appearances. His interposition in parliamentary affairs on coming



back to the old scene was characteristic. Dr. Kenealy, returned as member for Stoke-on-Trent on the crest of the strange wave of public enthusiasm which, in 1880, lifted high the champion of the Claimant to the Tichborne Estates, presented himself to take the oath and his seat. In accordance with the Standing Order, it is necessary for a member coming up after a by-election to be introduced by two others. Whalley, the eccentric member for Peterborough, was ready with his services. No other would associate himself with the advocate of Arthur Orton, the slanderer of his Judges. Help came from an unexpected quarter. John Bright, rising from the Front Opposition Bench, said that out of deference to the will of the large constituency who had elected Kenealy he would himself, if the hon. member would accept his companionship, be glad to walk with him to the table. So, between the great Tribune and the half-crazy member for Peterborough, Kenealy, hat in one hand, a stout umbrella in the other, walked up to the table and took the oath.

Among several fables to which in the wantonness of youth I gave birth was one which appeared at the time in the parliamentary sketch that had wide vogue in the *World*, then recently founded by Edmund Yates, to the effect that whilst Kenealy took the oath he hung his umbrella by its generous crook on the neck of the Mace. The story became part of accepted parliamentary history. The prosaic fact is that, when he reached forth his hand to take the form of oath handed him by the clerk, Kenealy leaned his gingham against the table on which the Mace reposed. I excuse myself with the reflection that it is not every flight of fancy that has even that substratum of fact.

It was noticed that when Bright unexpectedly



interposed in the Kenealy affair he was as confused as a young member making his maiden speech. He, the great master of phraseology, halted and stumbled among the words that forced themselves through his lips. For a moment there seemed danger of his utterly breaking down. He never quite got over this kind of paralysis through the remainder of his parliamentary second life. On a night in June, in the session of 1877, I observed him seated on the Front Opposition Bench hour after hour. The subject was a proposal to abolish capital punishment. He evidently intended to speak, and of course might have chosen his own time. He missed chance after chance, deferring his rising till after midnight, when the debate was about to collapse. Chancing to meet him at dinner the next night, I made some remark about his delayed interposition. He told me there had come back upon him the species of stage fright that possesses all new members on first addressing the House.

Even Mr. Gladstone was in his time subject to this influence. This would be incredible to observers of his later manner were it not affirmed by his own testimony. In the diary of his second session he records how, preparatory to making a speech, he silently "offered earnest prayer for Divine assistance."

Returning after long absence imposed by broken health, Bright frequently, as in this debate on the abolition of capital punishment, came down prepared to take part in the discussion. When a favourable moment arrived, the Speaker turning a friendly eye upon him and pausing a moment in expectation of his rising, he was possessed by a shiver of apprehension. While he hesitated the chance passed. Once on his feet facing the familiar scene, cheered by welcoming

voices, trepidation vanished. He was as calm, apparently as strong, as of yore, equally self-possessed, and commanding his audience.

Another parliamentary star whose lustre was dimmed when I came under its influence was Robert Lowe. Like Bright, he reached his fullest height in the storm and stress of Reform Bill debate in 1867. For some years later he remained an intellectual delight. He had more than one physical shortcoming that would have barred the pathway of success to a man of less supreme capacity. He had a harsh voice, faulty enunciation, eyesight so dimmed that when consulting his notes he had to hold them so close to his face as to hide it. His speech sparkled with wit, the flashes being sometimes dimmed by the shamefaced hurry with which they were produced.

I recall one example of Lowe's ready wit. The House was discussing an Endowed Schools Bill; Lord Sandon, joining in the controversy, delivered a bitter speech aimed at the Endowed Schools Commissioners. Before sitting down, it occurring to him that he might have gone too far in assault on constituted authority, he remarked that he had "carefully fenced himself" against being understood to pass unfriendly criticism upon the commissioner. Lowe, following, quoted the remark with the commentary, "There has been in the noble lord's speech much more of railing than of fencing."

Lowe's last appearance on the parliamentary stage was one of the most tragic episodes played upon it. In the spring of 1879 the Liberal Opposition in both Houses plucked up courage to move a vote of censure on the Government. On the third day of the debate Lowe interposed, and the House filled in anticipation

of an intellectual treat. For twenty minutes he spoke with his usual felicity, his accustomed command over his audience. Citation of extracts from the Blue Books at this stage becoming necessary to his argument, he took up a bundle of notes placed on the brass-bound box at the opening of his speech. Sheet after sheet of the manuscript was held within an inch of his eyebrows. None was the one he wanted. Failing to find the quotation, he lamely attempted to quote its substance. A few minutes later reference to his notes again became necessary. Amid sympathetic cheers from both sides he nervously searched among the hopeless conglomeration. He could not find the note he sought, and after a painful pause abruptly resumed his seat.

He never again spoke in a chamber still filled with the echo of many brilliant triumphs. In the following year, the Liberals coming into office, he meekly sought sanctuary in the House of Lords, where, till death finally sealed his lips, he sat mute, disguised as Lord Sherbrooke.

Since I first knew the House of Commons the methods of procedure and the style of debate have greatly altered. Obviously the latter is a sequence of the former. Thirty-six years ago the Speaker took the Chair at four o'clock. Questions began half an hour later, the progress of interrogation frequently extending to six o'clock. Then, as now, the text of questions was printed on a paper in the hand of every Member. Nevertheless, in accordance with immemorial custom, the Member mercilessly read aloud every word of his question. The Irish Members beginning to fall into line under the command of Parnell, shrewd Joseph Gillis Biggar perceived this



opportunity of obstructing business. He incited his colleagues to put down questions by the score, making them as lengthy as possible, as controversial as the supervision of the Speaker permitted.

That is a pleasing habit by no means unfamiliar at the present day. But in the seventies and the early sessions of the eighties, obstruction had another weapon in its armoury. In those happy times, there was nothing to prevent a small but active clique, whether it was called the Fourth Party or belonged to the Parnellite faction, from getting up a wrangle over a Ministerial answer to a question, and moving the adjournment in order to discuss the matter at length. To-day leave is occasionally given to move the adjournment, the privilege being unhampered by the absolutely futile condition that the request shall be supported by forty Members. But such motion may not be made till the close of the Question hour, and if permission be extorted by the necessary support, debate may not open till after the dinner hour, leaving the ordinary course of business undisturbed.

On one of the earliest days of the Parliament of 1880 Mr. Frank Hugh O'Donnell, scarcely veiling under form of a Question an attack on the newly appointed French Minister to the Court of St. James, met remonstrance by moving the adjournment. This happened at five o'clock in the afternoon, midway in the list of Questions. A row ensued prolonged till one o'clock the next morning, when, Mr. O'Donnell retiring in a state of physical exhaustion, the subject dropped, and the Speaker gravely called on the next Question on the paper.

One result of this state of things was to prevent the cream of debate rising till after the dinner hour,



an arrangement that involved late sittings. To-day, with the House master of its own time, questions are disposed of and Orders of the Day entered upon not later than four o'clock. Debate automatically closes at eleven. The great guns are fired off as early as possible, invariably before dispersal for dinner. In former times, with the length of sitting unlimited by the Standing Orders, the real business of debate did not begin earlier than ten o'clock, when Members began to stream back from dinner. When Disraeli and Gladstone faced each other across the Table it was a common thing for the Leader of the Opposition to rise at eleven o'clock to wind up a critical debate, talk for an hour and a half, and leave the Leader to reply at similar or greater length, regardless of the glowing dawn. In altered circumstances the style of speech-making becomes wholly different. Then men "orated;" now they talk.

A distinctive feature of the twentieth-century House of Commons is the disappearance of the orator. Time was, at and since the period of Pitt and Fox, when the House of Commons was a stage from which eminent men delivered elaborate discourses. Within my comparatively brief experience a great change has been wrought in this respect. There are able men in the present Parliament; there is not one who poses as an orator. New times, above all new Rules of Procedure, make new manners. There really is not time now for a man to lay himself out for a two hours' speech, as was a common custom so recently as a quarter of a century ago. With the House meeting in the afternoon at a quarter to three and abruptly closing debate at eleven, there is little room for such elaborate performance.

Moreover, the habit of Members in respect of debate is changed. Time was when 660 Members were content to form an audience enraptured by the eloquence of eight or ten. Now with special wires feeding local papers, every Member feels called upon to deliver a certain number of remarks on important bills or resolutions brought before the House. The average Member finds more satisfaction in talking than in listening. This, combined with a disposition to regard progress of legislative business as of more importance than flowers of oratory, completes the change of fashion. In these prosaic days, a Member, however eminent, rising with evident intent of delivering a set oration, would first be stared at, then left to discourse to himself, the Speaker, and an admiring family group in the Ladies' Gallery.

I remember in days that are no more a quite different state of things. In the seventies, even in the eighties, there were giants of oratory. Gladstone was the last survival. Even he towards the end of his career was influenced by the newer turn of thought which dominated Parliamentary debate. He could not help being eloquent when deeply moved. But he was more direct in his methods, less voluminous in his speech.

In his prime, in a great debate when political parties were set in battle array, Gladstone's transcendent oratorical gifts had full play. There was marked contrast in his manner of making a speech and of answering a question addressed to him in his Ministerial capacity. After purporting to make reply and taking some ten minutes to do it, he sat down, frequently leaving his interrogator and the House in a condition of dismayed bewilderment, hopelessly attempting to

groped their way through the intricacies of the sonorous sentences they had listened to. If, as happened in expounding a bill, or replying to a debate, he desired to make himself understood, he had no equal.

His manner in speech-making was more strongly marked by action than was that of his only rival, John Bright. He emphasised points by smiting the open palm of his left hand with sledge-hammer fist. Sometimes he, with gleaming eyes—"like a vulture's," Mr. Lecky genially described them,—pointed his forefinger straight at his adversary. In hottest moments he beat the brass-bound Box with clamorous hand that occasionally drowned the point he strove to make. Sometimes with both hands raised above his head; often with left elbow leaning on the Box, right hand with closed fist shaken at the head of an unoffending country gentleman on the back bench opposite; anon, standing half a step back from the Table, left hand hanging at his side, right uplifted, so that he might with thumb-nail lightly touch the shining crown of his head, he trampled his way through the argument he assailed as an elephant in an hour of aggravation rages through a jungle.

Disraeli lacked two qualities, failing which true eloquence is impossible. He was never quite in earnest, and he was not troubled by dominating conviction. Only on the rarest occasions did he affect to be roused to righteous indignation, and then he was rather amusing than impressive. He was endowed with a lively fancy and cultivated the art of coining phrases, generally personal in their bearing. When these were flashed forth he delighted the House. For the rest, at the period I knew him, when he had grown respectable and was weighted with responsibility, he was often



dull. There were, indeed, in the course of a session few things more dreary than a long speech from Dizzy. At short, sharp replies to questions designed to be embarrassing he was effective. When it came to a long speech, the lack of stamina was disclosed, and the House listened to something which, if not occasionally incomprehensible, was frequently involved.

When he rose to speak he rested his hands for a moment on the Box—only for a moment, for he invariably endeavoured to gain the ear of his audience by making a brilliant point in an opening sentence. The attitude he found most conducive to happy delivery was to stand balancing himself on heel and toe with hands in his coat-tail pockets. In this pose, with head hung down as if he were mentally debating how best to express a thought just born to him, he slowly uttered the polished and poisoned sentences, over which he had spent laborious hours in the study. The merest tyro knew a moment beforehand when Disraeli was approaching what he regarded as the most effective opening for dropping the gem of phrase he made-believe to have just dug up from an unvisited corner of his mind. He saw him lead up to it; he noted the disappearance of the hand in the direction of the coat-tail pocket, sometimes in search of a pocket-handkerchief brought out and shaken with careless air, most often to extend the coat-tails, whilst, with body gently rocked to and fro and an affected hesitancy of speech, the *bon mot* was flashed forth. Not being a born orator, but as a keen observer knowing the necessity noted by Hamlet in his advice to the players of accompanying voice by action, he performed a series of bodily jerks as remote from the natural gestures of the true orator



as is the waddling of a duck across a stubble field from the progress of a swan over the bosom of a lake.

John Bright, perhaps the finest orator known to the House of Commons in the last half of the nineteenth century, was morally and politically the antithesis of Disraeli. Before, in the closing years of a long life, he reached the unexpected haven of community with the Conservative Party on the question of Home Rule, political animosity passed by no ditch through the mire of which it might drag him. But it never accused him of speaking with an uncertain sound, of denouncing to-day what yesterday he upheld. To a public man this atmosphere of acknowledged sincerity and honest conviction is a mighty adjunct of power. To it Bright added airy graces of oratory. He kept himself well in hand throughout his speech, never losing his hold upon his audience. His gestures were of the fewest, but, unlike Disraeli's, they were appropriate because natural. A simple wave of the right hand, and the point of his sentence was emphasised. Nature gifted him with a fine presence and a voice the like of which has rarely rung through the classic chamber. "Like a bell," was the illustration commonly employed in any endeavour to convey an impression of its music. I should say like a peal of bells, for a single one could not produce the varied tones in which Bright suited his voice to his theme.

On the whole the dominant note was one of pathos. Probably because all his great speeches pleaded for the cause of the oppressed or denounced an accomplished wrong, a tone of melancholy ran through them. For the expression of pathos there were marvellously touching vibrations in his voice which carried to the

listener's heart the tender thoughts that came glowing from the speaker's, clad in simple words as they passed his tongue.

When I first knew the House no speech in full-dress debate was regarded as complete unless it were rounded off by an elaborate peroration. In this competition Mr. Gladstone was easily first. Disraeli also had his pet peroration. But it was pompous in conception, of the tinkling-cymbal order of construction. Gladstone's only competitor in this development of oratorical art was John Bright. Varying his ordinary practice of delivering the main part of his speech without the assistance of a note, Bright carefully wrote out the text of the peroration of his great speeches. He did not necessarily read from the manuscript. It was at hand in case of need.

Another adornment of speeches which did not survive the seventies was the introduction of quotations from the classic poets. John Bright in this competition "sat out," as they say of the fourth player in Bridge. I am not certain if Dizzy did not occasionally try his hand at a Latin tag, though I do not remember hearing him. Gladstone, with the literary wealth of Athens and Rome at command, frequently gilded his speech with choice extracts of the ore. Here his worthy competitor was Lowe, equally facile. When in forming his Budget Lowe embodied a Match Tax, ruining his reputation as a financier and imperilling the safety of his Government, it was shrewdly suspected that he was allured by the fancy which he, with almost childish delight, communicated to the House of printing on the matchbox stamp the motte: *Ex luce lucellum*. As was written of one of old time, "he had his jest and they [very nearly] had his estate." Lowe saved his

Ministerial life only by hastily abandoning his Match Tax and his motto. In House of Commons debate to-day the peroration is as much out of fashion as are the costumes worn in Goldsmith's comedies. The last halt made by the vanishing custom was on Budget night. Through the last quarter of the nineteenth century the Chancellor of the Exchequer expounding his Budget was expected to make several little jokes and one serious peroration. Never on such a momentous occasion did Gladstone condescend to the frivolity of a jest. The sustained eloquence of his peroration made up for deficiency in that direction. Harcourt was the first Chancellor of the Exchequer systematically to flash over arid wastes of Revenue returns the light of humour. His example was followed by such unexpected practitioners as Mr. Goschen and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. In the twentieth century, little jokes—the most telling relate to the fluctuating sale of rum and the yield of the Death Duties—are still made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on his annual field night. But, like the harp that once through Tara's halls the soul of music shed, the Peroration is mute.

Another marked change wrought by the hand of time in the habits of the House of Commons relates to dress. I have a precious print which shows the House of Commons assembled in the session of 1821. Members are seated in the old House dimly lit by candelabra pendant from the roof. It is the most appallingly respectable assembly I ever set eyes upon. Neither whisker nor moustache varies the grimness of the sedate countenances. All are dressed alike with high coat collar, stock carried up to chin, trousers cut tight to the leg and drawn over the instep by a strap. I

showed the print one day to Frank Lockwood, beloved equally of the Bar and Parliament, a man who carried an irrepressible sense of humour to the length of having in the same session served in succession as Solicitor-General in Lord Rosebery's Government and in that of the Marquis of Salisbury.

"How decorously dull!" he exclaimed, regarding the scene with quick interest. "How portentously respectable! There does not seem to be a single Irish Member among them; nor," he added, running his eye again over the crowded benches, "even a lawyer."

Sir James Fergusson, Postmaster-General in the Second Salisbury Administration, told me he remembered a time when no Member of the House of Commons who respected himself and his constituency sat in the presence of the Speaker without wearing gloves. Sir James, elected Member for Ayrshire whilst he was fighting in the Crimea, entered the House in 1854, and was from that point of calculation nineteen years my senior. I never saw the gloves, but I have distinct remembrance of the Sunday-go-to-meeting sartorial style of M.Ps. in the seventies. Every one was black-coated and, of course, top-hatted. One named Monk, who sat for Gloucester session after session, created a sensation, on the whole painful, by presenting himself on sultry days in a dove-coloured suit. It is true his late father had been a Bishop, but it was felt that he was rather imposing on the distinction.

I distinctly remember another shock suffered by the House when Lord Randolph Churchill entered wearing a pair of tan shoes. The Fourth Party was then at the height of its impudence, the plenitude of its power. Its young leader had, for months, alternately bullied the Prime Minister and tweaked the nose of the Leader



of the Opposition. These things had been suffered, not gladly, it is true, but in recognition of impotence to withstand them. This tan shoes atrocity was, on both sides of the House, felt to be going literally a step too far.

At this date it is curious to reflect upon these dead-and-gone emotions. On sultry afternoons the benches of the twentieth-century House of Commons present an appearance suggestive of Henley on Regatta day. The cylindrical silk hat, which, within the memory of the present Speaker, was regarded in the light of one of the pillars that sustain the British Constitution, is rarely seen. Straw hats, Homburg hats, and the common bowler have rudely shunted its solemnity. A working-man Member, returned for the first time to the present Parliament, beat the record by presenting himself in a soft brown wide-awake, the rim of which is in size and proportions planned on the scale of the sloping roof of a Swiss chalet. As for clothes, anything will do, the lighter in colour, the less conventional in cut, the better. The absence of a waistcoat is amply atoned for by the presence of a cummerbund.

It was by the last Parliament elected in the reign of Queen Victoria—the first King Edward VII. opened in person—that this revolution was completed. With it came in with a rush the fashion of Tea on the Terrace. That such things were accomplished under the genial, happy-go-lucky Premiership of Mr. Arthur Balfour is a circumstance in which some critics may find a moral. The function of Tea on the Terrace was a natural result of the state of things existing in the first five years of the new century. Mr. Balfour had at his command an overwhelming, up to the time of Mr. Chamberlain's excursion into the field of Protection,

a united and docile majority. The last thing demanded from them was contribution to debate. Votes, not talk, was what was looked for from their loyalty. They could not be expected to sit silent hour after hour listening to honourable gentlemen opposite, nor could they be trusted to remain at hand in the library or smoking-room. With quick intuition the Whips saw the possibilities of an afternoon function to which ladies contributed the charm of their presence. Tea on the Terrace was accordingly encouraged in high quarters. London society eagerly swallowed the bait, and the worried Whips were soothed by the knowledge that at the sound of the Division bell a battalion of Ministerialists would sally from the Terrace to resist the machinations of the Opposition trying to rush an unexpected Division.

Not least thorough in the changes wrought in the House of Commons during the last three decades is that affecting the personnel and the position of the Irish Party. When, in 1874, they came in with a rush, they were like a string of gamins breaking in on the sanctity of a Cathedral close. The deeply rooted traditions of the House of Commons imposing discipline and almost abject submission to the authority of the Chair, were defied. The authority of the Speaker in pre-Parnellite days is accurately indicated by the old story of a threat to "name" an offending Member.

"And what would happen if you had done it?" one privily asked the Speaker.

"Heaven only knows," answered the right honourable gentleman.

For generations a vague, obscure threat had sufficed to subdue the most reckless misdoer. Before Parnell and Mr. Biggar had been long to the fore, it became

necessary to enact a standing order attaching definite penalties as a consequence of the Speaker performing the ancient rite of "naming" a Member.

Mr. Butt, himself an old Parliamentary hand, was in the first session of the Disraelian Parliament so deeply imbued with the traditions of the House that he shrank from direct conflict with the Chair. There came a night when he, once the popular idol of the Nationalist Party, in sight of a full House quitted the Irish camp below the gangway to the left of the Speaker, seating himself in the serener quarter above it. Parnell thereupon, with the assistance of his grotesque, honest, delightfully original lieutenant, Joseph Gillis Biggar, took command, entering upon a campaign which before his fall transmuted the Parliamentary atmosphere, transformed its methods of procedure. The evolution of these two was one of the most remarkable, not the least momentous, episodes in the Parliamentary life of the last thirty years. One, a Cambridge man, of aristocratic birth; the other, a provision dealer from Belfast, uncultured, uncouth. The two extremes were drawn together by common hatred of the Saxon, stern resolve to smite him in his most sacred temple.

At the outset they were singularly unfitted for the self-appointed task. Neither had that fluency which is the common heritage of their countrymen. They turned the disqualification into a weapon of war. If, being on their legs, they could not straightway hit upon the precise phrase they sought, why, let the House of Commons wait till they did. The interval would serve by wasting a minute of public time, and in the business of obstruction every little helps. Enlarging on the principle, Joseph Gillis on a famous occasion held the House of Commons at bay whilst in husky voice he

read to it extracts from a Blue Book. At a quarter to nine o'clock, the entertainment having commenced at five o'clock in the afternoon, his voice began to fail. The Speaker, rising to order, called attention to the rule requiring Members to address the Chair.

"And," he added, "the observations of the honourable Member have not for some time past reached me."

"Very well, sir," said genial Joey B., ever ready to oblige; "I'll come closer."

Placing his Blue Book under his arm, picking up his tumbler of water, he stepped across the gangway, taking up a position conveniently under the hapless Speaker's left ear.

These deliberate, systematic outrages on Parliamentary etiquette and tradition worked out the redemption of the House of Commons. Up to the incursion of the Parnellites, rules of procedure handed down from Stuart times, whilst occasionally failing in their purpose, fared well enough. Evidently they must be recast to meet the new order of things. In the Eighties the House, most unwilling to move in that direction, gave up much time to reforming its ancient Standing Orders. The adoption of the closure, violently resented as an infringement of the privilege of free speech, did much to deliver the majority from the tyranny of the individual. The automatic interruption of debate, first on the stroke of midnight, now at eleven o'clock, struck at the root of possible disorder by minimising the recurrence of late sittings. The appointment of Grand Committees, involving a system of double labour shift, largely assisted in the furtherance of work achieved in a session.

As the Empire stretches its lusty limbs, the burden



of legislative labour increases. In this twentieth century the Mother of Parliaments is a weary Titan, yearning for the coming of the inevitable time when her load will be lightened by the devolution to local bodies of legislation on local matters.

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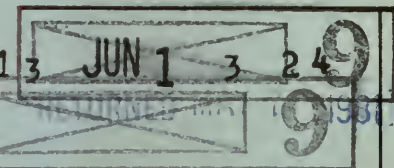
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